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ROBERT BROWNE, INDEPENDENT

DWIGHT C. SMITH
Bellingham, Washington

Although the exact date is not known, Robert Browne was born about the year 1550 at Tolethorpe Hall, which is the Manor House of Little Casterton, a Rutlandshire village a few miles from Stamford. The house appears to have been owned by the Browne family since 1377, when it was bought by John Browne, alderman of Stamford (1374-6, -7) and "wool-merchant engaged in the staple of Calais."¹ A son of this original owner was named John, and also served as alderman. So, in turn, did his son John, who held the office three times. This third John Browne began the much needed work of restoring All Saints Church in Stamford, a fine building of Norman type which had suffered severe damage in the War of the Roses. The restoration was carried on and completed by his two sons, John and William, who also continued the family tradition of public service: John was alderman of Stamford in 1448, 1453, 1462; William was several times alderman as well as sheriff of Rutland and Lincoln counties, and founder in 1484 of Browne Hospital, the Bede House of Stamford, which still stands opposite the Corn Market.²

The Browne family finally settled in Tolethorpe Hall during the lifetime of Christopher Browne, son of the fourth John. By this time it was certainly one of the leading families in the vicinity of Stamford. Christopher was not only alderman and sheriff, but member of Parliament from 1489 to 1495, and was designated "gentleman of the County of Rutland." Christopher Browne was twice married. By his first marriage, to Grace

¹ This material on Robert Browne's ancestry is based on Cater's article, "Robert Browne's Ancestors and Descendants," in *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, II, No. 3, 151ff. Cater quotes the provision that John Browne became owner of the "Mannour of Tolethorpe together with all its appurtenances, and the perpetual Advowson of the Chappel of the same: also all his lands, tene- ments, rents and services in the village of Little Casterton with the Reversion of the Patronage of the Church of the same."

² Cater points out that this great-great-uncle of Robert Browne purchased Lilford Hall, less than one half mile from Achurch, Robert Browne's parish for forty years.

Pinchbeck, he had a son named Francis, who was to be Robert Browne's grandfather. His second wife, who was a Miss Bedinfield of Norfolk, bore him three sons, the youngest of whom was named Edmund. Edmund Browne, Robert's great-uncle, married Joanna Cecil of Stamford, whose brother had a son named William. Thus, William Cecil was a nephew-by-marriage to the half-brother of Robert Browne's grandfather, was in the same generation as Robert's father, and was thirty years older than Robert. Considering the distant connection between them, it is all the more remarkable that when William Cecil became Lord Burghley he was willing to acknowledge this slight connection with the young firebrand, Robert. Certainly he could hardly have been blamed if he had refused to consider that the relationship was sufficient to impose any particular obligations upon himself. It is possible, however, that a closer friendship existed between the families than would necessarily be implied by the relationship. William Cecil's grandfather, David Cecil, was a member of Parliament, and therefore a colleague of Francis Browne, who succeeded his father Christopher, as member for their borough.

Francis Browne won favor at court in some way, and was rewarded by being "priviledged in the 18 year of King Henry VIII, to wear his cap in the presence of the King himself, or any other Lords Spiritual or Temporal in the Land; and not to put it off at any time, but onely for his own ease and pleasure."³ This honor was conferred in 1526, eleven years after the birth of his eldest son Anthony, who inherited Tolethorpe Hall on the death of Francis in 1542.

Anthony Browne, who was several times sheriff of Rutlandshire, married Dorothy Boteler, daughter of Sir Peter Boteler of Walton Woodall, Hertfordshire. They had seven children. Francis, the eldest, inherited Tolethorpe Hall when Anthony died at the age of seventy-five or thereabouts. Francis had married Lucy Mackworth, sister of a baronet, Sir Thomas Mackworth of Normanton. We shall see that upon his father's death Francis used his right over the living of Little Casterton church to assist his two clergymen brothers, Robert and Philip. A sister, Dorothy, married Guilbert Pickering of Titchmarsh, Northamptonshire, whose brother, Sir William Pickering, was

³ Evelyn, *Aerius Redivivus: or, the History of the Presbyterians, etc.* (Oxford, 1670), 295.

one of numerous fond courtiers who fancied themselves suitors for the hand of Elizabeth.⁴

We see, then, that Robert Browne was not a nonentity so far as family connections were concerned. He was related more or less intimately to several of the landed gentry in the district about Stamford. Moreover, the tradition of service in the public interest had been handed down in the family for nearly two centuries when Robert was born. They were responsible, respected people, whose social standing and general reputation in the community must have been assured. It can scarcely be doubted that we have here an additional explanation of the fact that Robert Browne enjoyed so great a degree of immunity from punishment, in spite of his repeated offences.

Of Robert Browne's early life very little is known. In 1570 he was admitted to Corpus Christi (Bene't) College, Cambridge. He graduated B.A. in 1572. Whether he had spent two years previously in another college, or how else he may have managed so that two years sufficed for his degree at Corpus Christi, is uncertain. At the outset of *A True and Short Declaration, Both of the Gathering and Joyning Together of Certayne Persons: and also the Lamentable Breach and Diuision which Fell Amongst Them*, he writes:

There were certayne persons in England of wiche some were brought vp in schooles, & in the Vniuersitie of Cambridge, and some in families & housshouldes as is in the manner in that countrie.⁵

Since he obviously belonged to the former of these two groups, we infer that he was "brought vp in school," presumably in Stamford. Crippen suggests that he entered Corpus Christi in 1570 because Thomas Aldrich, the Puritan leader, had recently been elected Master of the College.⁶ Upon leaving Cambridge, he began teaching school, as did some of his fellow radicals.

Some of these which had liued & studied in Cambridge, were there

⁴ Powicke, *Robert Browne, Pioneer of Modern Congregationalism* (London, 1910), 11, points out that Browne conducted Pickering's funeral in 1599, Titchmarsh being near Achurch.

⁵ Browne, *A True and Short Declaration, Both of the Gathering and Joyning Together of Certayne Persons: and also of the Lamentable Breach and Division which Fell Amongst Them* (Middleburgh, 1584?), sig. A recto, (reprinted London, 1888).

⁶ Crippen, *Introduction to the reprint of Browne's A Treatise of Reformation, etc.* (London 1903), 5. Jessopp notes this coincidence of dates without comment in *Dictionary of National Biography* (63 vols. and later supplements, London, from 1885), VII, 57.

knowne & counted forward in religion, & others, also both there & in the countrie were more careful & zelous, then their froward enimies would suffer.

They in Cambridge were scattered from thense, some to one trade of life & some to an other: as Robert Browne, Robert Harrison, William Harrison, Philip Browne,⁷ Robert Barker. Some of these applied theselues to teach schollers; to the which labour, R. Browne also gaue himselfe for the space of three years.⁸

Where it was that he taught school is not definitely known. Powicke thinks it was probably at Oundle in Northhamptonshire.⁹ Crippen says that according to tradition it was Southwark.¹⁰ Pierce says it was in East Anglia, probably at Bury St. Edmunds; and he thinks the dates were 1574 to 1577, although he does not say what happened between 1572 and 1574.¹¹ Burrage, who also admits the possibility that it may have been Oundle, suggests Stamford, where family influence probably secured the position for him; he also reckons that Browne began teaching in 1575, possibly having spent the intervening years at Cambridge.¹² Browne himself says that he had "a special care to teach religion with other learning" and that he kept "his schollers in such awe & good order, as all the Tounsemē where he taught gaue him witnes." The state of the times, however, filled him with great concern for the future of these children. "Hereuppon he fell into great care, & was soare greeued, while he long considered manie thinges amisse, & the cause of all, to be the woful and lamētable state off the church."¹³

It was, then, not pique at any imagined insult which led him to explore the problem of the church and its proper function. He was not being pressed too hard by any officious ecclesiastical superior, but was a layman, a teacher, whose concern for the church grew out of his interest in the welfare of the boys in his charge. The times seemed to him ominous in their import for the rising generation. Something ought to be done; and as he looked for the underlying cause, he grew certain that the state into which the church had fallen accounted for the deplorable

7 Evidently Robert's next older brother.

8 *True & Short Declaration*, sig. A recto.

9 Powick, *op. cit.*, 15.

10 Crippen, *op. cit.*, 6.

11 Pierce, *John Penry, His Life, Times, and Writing* (London, 1923), 322. Reasons for doubting this theory will be seen below.

12 Burrage, *The True Story of Robert Browne* (Oxford, 1906), 2, 65.

13 *T. & S. D.*, sig. A recto.

conditions in national life. What, therefore, was the matter with the church? Wherein did it fail to measure up to what the Lord had intended it to be?

Wherefore he laboured much to know his duetie in such thīges; and because the church of God is his kingdom, & his name especially is thereby magnified; he wholy bent him selfe to search & find out the matters of the church: as how it was to be guided & ordered, & what abuses there were in the ecclesiastical gouernment then vsed.

These things he had long before debated in himself, & with others & suffered also some trouble about thē at Cābridge; yet nowe, on fresh, he set his mind on these thinges & night & day did consult with himselfe & others about thē, least he should be ignorant or mistake anie off those matters.¹⁴

His mind being thus absorbed with the fundamental problems of the church, Browne began to act upon what seemed the clear unrolling of truth before his earnest gaze.

Whatsoeuer thinges he ffound belonging to the church, & to his calling as a mēber off the church, he did put it in practis. For euē little children are off the church & kingdom of God; yea off such saith Christ doth his kingdom consist: & therefore both in his schole he laboured that the kingdom off God might appeare, & also in those of the towne with whom he kept companie. So by word & practissee he tried out all thīgs, that he might be staied both in iudgmēt & cōsell, & also in interprising matters, as his duetie should lead him.¹⁵

If his words mean anything, they seem to indicate that some sort of conventicle or "Prophecyng" was being held, however informally. Pierce, assuming that this was at Bury St. Edmunds, believes that Coppin and Thacker were among Browne's converts, and attributes their first difficulties with the authorities to the effect of this influence.¹⁶ When we think of the vigilance with which radical school teachers are watched by the conservative elements in the population today, it does not surprise us to know that this disturbing young man was viewed with alarm.

But this his dealīg got hī much enuie of the preacher & sōe others where he taught, & much trouble also whē he broke his mīd more plainlie vnto thē.¹⁷

We can imagine the vain attempts of some friends to persuade him to compromise. Refusing to change his ways, he was re-

¹⁴ *T. & S. D.*, sig. A recto.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Pierce, *op. cit.*, 322.

¹⁷ *T. & S. D.*, sig. A recto.

moved from his post, but evidently stayed on as a private tutor, until the force of circumstances seemed too strong for him.

Presētie after this he was discharged of his schole by the grudge of his enimies. Yet he taught still with great goodwill & fauour of the Townsemē, till such time as the plague increased in the Towne, and his schollers, though neuer so well plied & profited by him, were notwithstanding either flitting awaie vpon such occasions, or to hastilie sent to the vniuersitie, or because of their misguiding there, to some occupations, he thought that the fruct of his labor was too much vncertaine & tooke counsell if by sōe better waie he might profit the church. Then he gaue warning to the Toune and departed to come home, as his father willed him.¹⁸

Probably news of his discharge from school had reached home, either through his own reporting or by some other means. Perhaps his father hoped then to accomplish, what he later gave up in despair, the achievement of making his fractious son see reason. Very likely the family were also worried lest he be stricken by the plague. Consequently, his father urged him to do what his own sense of failure was also pressing upon him. His vision of what ought to be the result of his labors was so far from being realized in his young charges that he was easily persuaded to leave his teaching. But living at home soon palled. His father evidently had scant sympathy with what must have seemed to be quite crazy ideas. Moreover, idleness had no attractions for the young man upon whom rested the burden of reforming the church.

So might he haue lived with his father, being a man of some countenance, & haue wanted nothinge, if he hadd beene soe disposed, but his care as always before, so then especially being set on the church of God, he asked leaue of his father, and took his Iournie to Cābridge, frō wēse a few yeaeres before he had departed.¹⁹

Among the most respected and well-loved Puritan leaders in the whole region about Cambridge was the Reverend Richard Greenham of Dry Drayton. Browne lived with him for a time.

He ther had dealig with M. Greēhā of dreitō, whoe of all others he hard sai was most forward, & thought that with him and by him he should haue some stai of his care, and hope of his purpose. Wherefore, as those which in ould tyme were called the prophetes & children of the prophets & liued to gether, because of corruptiōs among others, so come he vnto him.²⁰

However much others may have been alarmed or upset by

18 *T. & S. D.*, sig. A recto & verso.

19 *T. & S. D.*, sig. A verso.

20 *T. & S. D.*, sig. A verso.

Browne's views, Richard Greenham evidently trusted him, even to the point of violating the rules, and letting Browne into his pulpit without a preaching license.²¹

He was suffered, as others also in his house, to speake of that part of scripture which was vsed to be red after meales. And although he said that without leauē & special word from the bishop, he was to suffer none to teach openlie in his parish, yet without anie such leauē he suffered R. B.²²

The great authority and power exercised by the bishops appeared to Browne to be so completely contrary to God's will that he welcomed a heaven-sent opportunity to defy the ecclesiastical officials, by serving a church to which he was invited and encouraged by the local authorities.

Notwithstanding, when R. B. sawe that the bishops feet were to much sett in euerie place, & that spiritual infectiō to much spred, euē to the best reformed places, he tooke that occasiō which the Lord did first geue him for redresse . . . when certaine in Cambridge had boath moued him, & also with consent of the Maior & Vice-chancelar, called him to preach among them. . . .²³

According to Thomas Fuller, Browne preached in Bene't Church, at Cambridge, creating quite a stir at the time.

He used sometime to preach at Ben't Church, where the vehemency of his utterance passed for zeal among the common people, and made the vulgar to admire, the wise to suspect him. Dr. Still, afterwards Master of Trinity, (out of curiosity or casually present at his preaching) discovered in him something extraordinary which he presaged would prove the disturbance of the church, if not seasonably prevented.²⁴

The hierarchy was, Browne felt, a usurping power in what ought to be God's kingdom. Clearly, the Apostles had felt themselves inferior in authority to the church, to which they expected to give account of what they did. But the bishops claimed a power over the churches which was essentially tyrannical, setting up and deposing ministers where it was plainly the church's prerogative and obligation to call its own ministers. When Browne argued the point with his friends, some said that, with all their faults the bishops did have the word and sacraments of God, and should therefore be accepted, since God tolerated them. Browne, however, wrestled with the question, and came to the

²¹ Dexter, *The Congregationalism of the Last Three Hundred Years as Seen in Its Literature* (London, 1880), 92, cites Greenham's good opinion as favorable evidence for Browne.

²² *T. & S. D.*, sig. A verso.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Fuller, *Church History of Britain* (London, 1842, original edition 1655), III, 62.

conclusion that since the whole ecclesiastical system was patently unscriptural, it could not truly be counted acceptable in the sight of God. What, then, should he do? Remembering that Christ had sat among the doctors in the temple, he decided to get along as best he could without any open breach on his part. But he would not by word or deed admit their authority over him, even when a license to preach was secured for him.²⁵

Howbeit the bishops seals were gotten him by his brother,²⁶ which he both refused beffore the officers, & being written for him would not paie for them; & also, being afterward paied for by his brother, he lost one and burnt another in the fier, & another being sent him to Cambridge he kept it by him till in his trouble it was deliuered to a Iustisse off peace, & so from him, as is supposed, to the bishop of Norwich.²⁷

Even with a license duly issued in his name, he took care to explain to his congregation that it had no bearing on his right and duty to preach, since "his duetie, he said, was first to discharge his message before God & deserue no reprove of them, & then also either toe find them worthie, or else if thei refused such reformation as the Lord did nowe call for, to leauie them as his duetie did bind him; . . ." Indeed, the parishes were in so low a spiritual state that he could only conclude "the kingdom off God was not to be begun by whole parishes, but rather off the worthiest, were they neuer so fewe."²⁸ A half year in this relationship convinced him that the end he sought could not be attained by any such effort within the established church. Therefore, he gave notice of his intention to leave, refusing both the stipend which had been gathered together for him, and an invitation to the pastorate.

Falling ill, he gave up "open preaching & . . . daily exhortation in sundrie houses."²⁹ During either his illness or his convalescence, he was visited by "the bishops officer named Bancroft"³⁰ who read to him a letter issued by the Privy Council, containing instructions against permitting preachers other than those duly in charge of specific parishes. Browne bluntly re-torted that if he had accepted the call he would certainly not have

25 Browne deals at length with this in *T. & S. D.*, sig. A verso to sig. A3 verso.

26 Apparently he means Philip once more.

27 *T. & S. D.*, sig. A3 verso. Powicke, *op. cit.*, 19, gives the license date, June 7, 1579. Burrage, *op. cit.*, 5f, gives the Latin text and translations of the Dismissory Letters (June 6, 1579) and the License to Preach (June 7, 1579).

28 *T. & S. D.*, sig. A3 verso.

29 *T. & S. D.*, sig. A4 recto.

30 Powicke, *op. cit.*, 21f, gives proof that this was Richard Bancroft, later Bishop Bancroft, who quoted Browne at Paul's Cross in February, 1588/9.

ceased preaching just because of this letter; and although he was ceasing to preach, he wished it clearly understood that this letter had nothing whatever to do with his decision.³¹

The task of "redressing" the abuses of the church still weighed upon his conscience, but the problem was how to set about the matter most effectively. Even in the liberal-minded surroundings at Cambridge he had come to the conclusion that little could be hoped for so far as the regular parishes were concerned. He remembered, however, that in Norfolk there were some "whome he harde saie were uerie forward." Here perhaps were some of those "worthiest were they neuer so fewe" who might be the nucleus for a fresh attempt to realize the kingdom of God. Perhaps they would be prepared for a voluntary association instead of the compulsory (and therefore antichristian) gathering in the parishes.³²

While he was pondering the matter, he came upon Robert Harrison, whom he had known in student days at Corpus Christi, and who was a Norfolk man. Harrison, being a great admirer of Richard Greenham, was about to ask his aid in securing a license from the bishop. Browne, however, dissuaded him. He recounted his own experience, declaring that so far as ordaining or licensing by bishops were concerned, "he abhorred such trash and pollution as the marches & poison of Antichrist." The upshot was that Harrison returned to Norwich. Browne came soon after, and stayed with him at St. Giles Hospital,³³ of which Harrison had been made master by the mayor and aldermen, following an effort to place him on the teaching faculty of Aylsham Free School. Harrison's unwillingness to accept the prescribed forms in the Prayer Book had been chief reason for his removal from the teaching position after he had occupied it less than a month.³⁴ Moreover, his standing with the ecclesiastical authorities was not improved by a letter which he wrote in 1576, and which Waldegrave printed with the title, *A pythie letter to the Bish. of Nor.*

Among other things, Harrison assured the Bishop that far from being in office through the "goodnesse of our high Prince . . . the Archbishop

31 *T. & S. D.*, sig. A4 recto. Burrage, *op. cit.*, 8, quotes from the Council's letter.

32 *T. & S. D.*, sig. A4 recto & verso. Personal knowledge of the region seems lacking to him.

33 *T. & S. D.*, sig. A4 recto.

34 The story may be found in Strype, *The Life and Acts of Matthew Parker* (London, 1711), 449f; and *Annals of the Reformation* (London, 1925, reprinted in 4 vols., Oxford 1824), in vol. II of which the story is told on p. 434.

begate you, and the Bishop of Rome begate him, and the Diuell begate him. So now in respect of your offices, you see who is your grandsier, and who is your great grandsier.³⁵

Having settled at Norwich, the two men considered at great length what should be their attitude towards the church. Harrison had greatly admired Greenham, and he also thought highly of John More and Archdeacon Roberts of Norwich.³⁶ In 1576 these two latter men, in company with several others, had petitioned against enforced uniformity.

Wee suffer ourselves rather to be displaced then to yeld to certen things. Our Bodyes, goods, lands, life, Wife and Children be in her Maties hands, onlie our souls, which must be either saved or dampned, we reserve to our God, who alone is able to save or dampne.³⁷

In 1578, however, part of the group had sent in a compromise submission, agreeing to the required doctrinal articles, and promising not to oppose the ceremonies. It appears that a somewhat similar "Supplication of Norwich Men" was prepared and ready to send to London about the time that Browne arrived in the city (probably early in 1580). He and Harrison both signed it.³⁸ Browne does not mention the incident in his own account of his career. Peel suggests that he may have signed in haste, or after great urging, and then later regretted doing so because its position was not sufficiently far advanced for his own conclusions.

Among the 175 signers of the supplication were Robert Barker (evidently the one to whom Browne referred as a fellow student at Cambridge), John Flower (who may be the "Uncle Flower" to whom Browne later wrote an important letter), and John Allens.³⁹ Peel offers the interesting theory that this John Allens may have been a brother-in-law of both Harrison and Browne. Harrison had "certaine sisters,"⁴⁰ and when disputes began at Middleburgh, he accused Browne of having "condemned his Sister Allens as a reprobate."⁴¹

The faults they Laied Against him Were, For rebukeinge Rob. H. Sister of Want of Love, And off abhorring the Pastar: Which They

35 *A Parte of a Register* (Edinburgh, 1593), 365-370.

36 Burrage, *New Facts Concerning John Robinson* (Oxford, 1910), 21, thinks Browne's ideas of church polity were influenced by what he knew of More's church, (St. Andrews, Norwich).

37 Peel, *Calendar of the Second Parte of a Register* (Cambridge, 1915), 143ff.

38 Peel, *Calendar, etc.*, 157 ff, gives the substance of this, together with the names of the 175 signers.

39 Peel, *The Brownists in Norwich and Norfolk about 1580* (Cambridge, 1920), 6ff, shows that this supplication must have been written in 1580; he points out these names.

40 *T. & S. D.*, sig. B1 verso.

41 *Ibid.*, C3 verso.

Counted a Slandar. Likewise for rebukinge her of Judgeing Wrong Fullie on The Printer, Which Was also made a slander.⁴²

Apparently, then, Harrison's sister had married an Allens, or else Harrison himself married an Allens in Aylsham, in which case the "Sister Allens" would be his sister-in-law. Presumably the Allens baby, at whose christening Harrison as godfather made the scene which led to his being discharged from the Aylsham Free School, was the child of some one of this family. Moreover, Browne's wife was Alice Allen who, Powicke suggests, may have been from Aylsham, although the oft-repeated assertion is that she came from Yorkshire.⁴³ That both men may have married into the Allens family certainly seems not impossible; and since Browne boarded with Harrison and his wife on arriving at Norfolk, it is easy to believe that he would have occasion to meet a sister of his hostess. At any rate, Browne was married either during his stay about Norwich, or else at Middleburgh.

We have no certain knowledge as to all that Browne was doing in the year which followed his coming to Norwich. But by the spring of 1581 he had succeeded in stirring up so much revolt against the established church that Bishop Freke wrote from Norwich on April 19 to inform Lord Burghley of the disorder which he had found at Bury St. Edmunds, when making a regular visitation to that town; and of the arrest of the two chief trouble-makers.

.... great divisions among the people, some given to fantastical innovations; there were, moreover, divers matters of importance exhibited and proved against Mr. Handson, who is, in very deed, the only man there blowing the coals whereof this fire is kindled and herewith I send other articles ministered against one Robert Browne, a minister, and his several answers thereunto: the said party being lately apprehended in this country, upon complaint made by many godly preachers, for delivering unto the people corrupt and contentious doctrine, contained and set down more at large in the same articles. His arrogant spirit of reproofing being such as is to be marvelled at, the man being also to be feared, lest, if he were at liberty, he would seduce the vulgar sort of the people, who greatly depend on him, assembling themselves to the number of a hundred at a time, in private houses and conventicles to hear him, not without danger of some thereabout.⁴⁴

⁴² *Ibid.*, C4 recto.

⁴³ Peel, *Brownists*, 9, says that this statement is first given without any citing of authority in Blore, *History and Antiquities of Rutlandshire*.

⁴⁴ Hanbury, *Historical Memorials Relating to the Independents, or Congregationalists* (London, 1839), I, 19, gives this from Lansdowne MSS. 33 (No. 13). Strype, *Annals*, III, 21f., does likewise. Burrage, *True Story*, 14, quotes it with original spelling as it stands in the manuscript.

It is evidently this activity of the bishop and his officers against them to which Browne refers when he writes, "much trouble and persecution did followe yet some did cleave fast to the trueth, yet some fell awaie."⁴⁵

Burghley replied, two days later, that he supposed the Browne in question was a kinsman of his, in which case he felt sure that lenient treatment and persuasion would suffice to correct his waywardness. If not, he advised that Browne be sent to him at London.

Forasmuch as he is my kinsman, if he be son to him whom I take him to say, and that his error seemeth to proceed of zeal rather than malice, I do therefore wish he were charitably conferred with and reformed . . . and in case there shall not follow thereof such success as may be to your liking, that then you would be content to permit him to repair hither to London, to be further dealt with as I shall take order for upon his coming: for which purpose I have written a letter to the sheriff, if your lordship shall like thereof.⁴⁶

Evidently this interest on the part of his influential kinsman served to secure a second chance for Browne. The outburst of repression against the whole company seems to have been followed by a period of quiet. The group, however, was far from subdued. They agreed that they must prepare to resist any repetition of suppressive measures, so that they might stand fast in the faith. "There was a day appointed, and an order taken ffor redresse off the former abuses and for cleauing to the Lord in greater obediēce. So couenāt was geuē to hould together." Taking each item in the covenant separately, they all agreed, "saiing: to this we geue our consent."

1. . . . thei gaue their consent to ioine them selues to the Lord in one couenant and felloweship together & to keep and seek agreement vnder his lawes and gouernment . . .

2. . . . thei agreed off those which should teach them and watch for the salvation of their soules whom thei allowed and did chose as able & meet for that charge, . . . they praied for their watchfulness and diligence & promised their obedience.

3. . . . an order was agreed on ffor their meetings together ffor their exercises therein, as for praier, thanckesgiuing, reading of the scriptures, for exhortation & edifying, ether by all men which had the guift or by those which had a special charge before others. . . .

4. . . . anie might protest, appeale, complaine, exhort, dispute, reprove, &c. as he had occasion, but yet in due order, which was the also declared.

5. . . . all should further the Kingdom of God in themselues & especial-

45 *T. & S. D.*, sig. C2 recto.

46 Fuller, *op. cit.*, III, 62f.

lie in their charge and household iff thei had anie, or in their friendes and companions and whosoeuer was worthie.

6. . . . thei particularlie agreed off the manner howe to watch to disorders, & reforme abuses . . . assembling . . . teaching priuatelie . . . warning and rebukeing both priuatelie and openlie; for appointing publick humbling in more rare iudgementes, & public thankegeuing in straunger blessings . . . chosing teachers, guides, and relieuers when thei want; for separating cleane from vncleane; for receauing anie into the fellowship; for presēting the dailie success of the church & the wants thereof; for seeking to other churches to haue their help, being better reformed, or to bring them to reformation; for taking an order that none contend openlie, nor persecute, nor trouble disorderly, nor bring false doctrine, nor euil cause after once or twise warning or rebuke.⁴⁷

This renewed disobedience greatly perturbed Bishop Freke, who had supposed that the original suppression would suffice against these rebellious folk. On August 2 he wrote Burghley again, begging his aid against Browne, for the purpose of "suppressing him especially, that no further inconvenience follow by this his return."

. . . by the good aid and help of my Lord Chief Justice, and Mr. Justice Anderson his associate, the chiefest of such factions were so bridled, and the rest of their followers so greatly dismayed, as I verily hoped of much good and quietness to have thereof ensued, had not the said Browne now returned, contrary to my expectation . . . having private meetings in such close and secret manner as that I know not possibly how to suppress the same . . . if it would please your Lordship to give me your good advice, how to prevent such dangers as through the strange dealings of some of the gentlemen in Suffolk about Bury, is like to ensue, I should be much bound to your Honour for the same. . . .⁴⁸

It was about this time that Freke complained of favor shown to Coppin and Thacker, two troublesome ministers, who had been imprisoned for disobedience at Bury St. Edmunds, and who had forthwith labored earnestly to convert their fellow-prisoners. The local justices, faced by the problem of having men in prison thus corrupted, let Coppin and Thacker go. To Freke's complaint about their policy, they replied that they had repeatedly tried to change the attitude of these two men.

But when by experience we found, that neither our entreating, nor the often godly references and labours of diverse learned and godly pastors (which we only procured) could anything prevail, we gave them up to their froward wills; and became earnest suitors both to the bishops and judges,

⁴⁷ *T. & S. D.*, sig. C2 verso.

⁴⁸ Hanbury, *op. cit.*, I, 20, quotes Lansdowne MSS. 33 (No. 20); Burrage (as above) 15f, gives the original spelling as well.

that they might be removed out of our prison for fear of infecting others, which we could never obtain at the bishop's hand.⁴⁹

One of the officials thus in the bishop's bad graces was Sir Robert Jermyn. Now came this additional problem of what to do about Browne. Sir Robert wrote to Burghley on July 28, begging the Lord Treasurer to do what he could to keep Browne from getting himself into further and more serious trouble. When Browne returned to Bury, after being sent to London, at Burghley's request, Sir Robert sent for him, in order to warn him that his course alarmed many honest and godly men, and also discredited more reasonable efforts at reform. Browne's reply, he said, "contained many things godly and reasonable, and such as might truly be wished and prayed for." At the same time, there were other things "strange and unheard" not to mention impractical. He hoped, therefore, that Burghley would put a check upon the young man's enthusiasm, both for his own good and for those whom he might lead astray. Properly directed, he might indeed render a profitable service to the church.⁵⁰

There is no definite information as to how often Browne was imprisoned during these months of activity about Norfolk. According to Fuller, Browne in later life "used to boast, that he had been committed to thirty-two prisons, and in some of them he could not see his hand at noon-day."⁵¹ He was certainly imprisoned in Norfolk in April. Presumably it was after Freke's letter of August 2 that he was "held as prisoner at London."⁵² Word came to him that the covenanting group were greatly perturbed over the question of emigration. Some were most eager to find refuge in Scotland. Browne sent word from prison that they should not hasten to leave England. They might yet bear fruitful witness to the truth. Moreover, God would surely deliver them from too great persecution. If in such case the divine will should lead them abroad, well and good. But "rather indeed would he haue it to be a deliurance by the Lord then a cowardly fleeing off their owne devising." Scotland, he was sure, would never do as a place of refuge. "It framed itself in those matters to please England too much." Therefore, "we could not there be suffered . . . some corruptiō . . . from their parishes . . . or

49 Strype, *Annals*, III, 172.

50 Strype, *Annals*, III, 30f, gives the full text. Dexter, *op. cit.*, 70, gives the dates as here quoted.

51 Fuller, *op. cit.*, III, 65.

52 *T. & S. D.*, sig. C2 verso.

great trouble wrought vs from England." He was less opposed to the idea of going "into Gersey or Garnsey," but thought they should move slowly. When "Diuerse of them were againe im-
prisoned, & the rest in great trouble & bondage out of prison," they agreed "that the Lord did call them out of England."⁵³

The little company emigrated to Middleburgh, in Zealand, there to develop a true church without hindrance from civil or ecclesiastical authorities. The exact date of their arrival is not known. By August, 1582, however, Richard Schilders had printed Browne's first and most widely known book. It consisted finally of three treatises bound together, although in earlier copies only two were included.⁵⁴ It was entitled thus:

A Booke
WHICH SHEWETH THE
life and manners of all true Christians
And howe vnlike they are vnto Turkes and Papistes
and Heathen folke.

Also the pointes and partes of all diui-
nitie that is of the reuealed will and worde of God are
declared by their seuerall Definitions
and Diuisions in order as fol-
loweth.

Also there goeth a Treatise before of
Reformation without taryng for anie, and of the wicked-
nesse of those Preachers, which will not reforme them
selues and their charge, because they will
tarie till the Magistrate commaunde
and compell them.

By me, ROBERT BROWNE.

MIDDLEBVRGH.

Imprinted by Richarde Painter⁵⁵
1582

⁵³ *Ibid.*, sig. C3 recto.

⁵⁴ Copies with all three are very rare, as Burrage points out, *True Story*, 18.

⁵⁵ Painter is, of course, the English for Schilders.

In those later copies which include all three treatises, there is included, before the text of *A Booke Which Sheweth*, a preface to and the text of :

A Treatise vpon the 23 of Matthewe, both for an order of studying and handling the Scriptures, and also for auouydng the Popishe disorders, and vngodly cōmunion of all false Christians, and especiallie of wicked Preachers and hirelings.

It is reported that Harrison provided the money to pay for the printing of these three treatises, as well as his own *A Little Treatise vpon the firste verse of the 122 Psalm.*⁵⁶

On August 22, 1582, the English merchants in the Low Countries wrote to Walsingham, sending a volume containing the two tracts, and saying that they had submitted the book to Thomas Cartwright, who disapproved of it. They had therefore persuaded the authorities at Antwerp to do what they could to suppress all circulation of the tracts.⁵⁷ Another letter on September 2 reported that over a thousand copies of the book were known to have been printed, of which a great many had been shipped to England. The Prince of Orange was doing his best to suppress it. The company with Browne were a small, ill-conditioned group, who nevertheless seemed to have made numerous friends in Middleburgh.

. . . beinge at Middelbourg, I found of Brownes boks to be sold openly: there have bene printed of them above one thousand, and many sent into England . . . I understande . . . that the Prince of Orange had written for the suppresinge of the books, which ar alredy sent into England . . . for in Middelbourg . . . there ar none to be found. Browne was alsoe sought but not found and yet I think not out of the towne; there is an assembly there of some thirty or fourty persons, which ar in very poore estate, and for the most parte visited with sicknes, not wel aggreinge with the aire in those parts. They geve out of them selves that they are in all respects duetifully affected unto the Q. Matye . . . Yt shold appere that the Ministers and people in Middlebourg are not ill affected vnto Browne and his followers, beinge perswaded that there voluntary exile is for matter of relligion and for there consience, and many of the towne understandinge englishe, doe oftentimes repaire to there praiers and as-

56 S.(tephen) B.(redwell), *the Rasing of the Foundations of Brownisme* (London, 1588) sig. A2 verso.

57 Pearson, *Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism* (Cambridge, 1925), 212, cites *State Papers Eliz. Holl. and Fland.* XVI, No. 113.

semblies, which ar kepte in Brownes house which he hathe hired in the towne.⁵⁸

The sufferings which the exiles endured because of the climate were a mere fraction of their woes. There developed among them a tragic spirit of dissension which soon made a mockery of their fine hopes for perfection. Browne's version of the trouble is the most complete which we have. While he admits that there will always be differences of opinions and misunderstandings in the church, he insists that there is a "remedie of such things" in the Lord's ordinance, if only it be faithfully observed. Such differences as might be expected had been originally anticipated and provided for, but "when the pastor fell sick & could not be present at the exercises, nor visit them priuatlie in houses, the stirring did freshly beginn againe."⁵⁹ The discontented members nursed their grievances secretly, and so grew convinced in their opposition. Garrison, hearing tales of uncharitable judgment by Browne against his sister, first talked of the matter with some of those who joined him in feeling irritated at their leader. Thereafter, they presented their accusations in a formal meeting, at which Browne brought forward witnesses in his defence, to show that his words of criticism had been greatly exaggerated in the report given. Prior to the meeting, he expostulated with Garrison for having been so ready to listen to an evil report, but his rebuke was not taken kindly. Garrison, brooding over Browne's words, declared he would withdraw from the group unless "there were some remidie procured." He also wrote out his grievances against Browne, but refused to show them to him when asked to do so. He also called a meeting of his sympathizers to discuss their grievances.⁶⁰

Browne's answer was to summon a regular meeting in his rooms, at which he insisted that the accusations against him be supported by at least two witnesses each, and that they be dealt with in proper order. His opponents, however, shouted down his attempts at securing any such orderly procedure. Browne said he would not remain in the meeting to be treated in such fashion; but, "they were further out of order, so that either twise or thrise he was forced to rys vp & leaue them." He was

58 *Ibid.*, 214f, quotes these *State Papers*, XVII, No. 3.

59 *T. & S. D.*, sig. C3 recto and verso.

60 *T. & S. D.*, sig. C3 recto and verso.

then "condemned as an vnlawful Pastor"; they said he was not to "keep the exercises, also that he was to confesse his faults before thei would Ioine with hī." Remembering that this was his room, "he cāe in agaīe and tould thē that he was vnwilling thei should vees their meeting in his chamber after that manner."⁶¹

Harrison and his party thereupon met elsewhere to condemn Browne. He had demanded written charges, which they now drew up, declaring: that he had falsely accused Harrison of "Notable apparēt wickedness," thereby breaking the covenant in receiving false reports against Harrison and his brother, and troubling the church in that matter; that he had entertained false suspicions against one of the church members, in the matter of the pawning of a certain silver spoon; and that he had slandered Harrison for murmuring against him. When Browne "perceaued how that diuers tymes priuile, and now also openli thei cast him off, he also openli pronounced it, that he had noe charge off them if they soe continued to withdraw them selues." With all their discontent, the prospect of such a breach evidently sobered them, and they decided to try once more to get along amicably. Harrison "both openlie in the Church and particularlie from man to mā & From house to house did acknowledge that he had delt vnauduisadlie against R. B. in sundrie things."⁶²

Perhaps Browne's calm assumption of injured innocence was too much for them, with its perpetual reminder of how they had wrongfully dealt with a virtuous man. At any rate, "ffor all this the grudge lay hid in the harts of diuers and new meetings were had against R. B. where in agaī accusations were had without Wittnesses." Browne's account unconsciously reveals the intolerable manner in which he put himself in the right and the others in the wrong. Harrison, he says, listened to more slanders "& nether shame which before came on him, or the Iudgement of God by the death of his children, nor sundrie warnings otherwise could cause him to lay doū his malice & troublesome mind." Even taking Browne's account of the quarrel at its face value, one must still feel some sympathy for the bereaved parent whose colleague could be so complete a Job's comforter. The whole dreary affair must have been pitifully disillusioning to all concerned. After a winter or two of inclement weather, bickering

61 *Ibid.*, sig. C3 verso.

62 *T. & S. D.*, sig. C4 recto.

among themselves, and more or less constant illness among the whole company, it is hardly surprising to learn that Harrison began to suggest "that thei might Lawfully Return INTO ENGLAND AND there haue their dwellinge."⁶³

There developed a third movement of revolt which ended, like the others, in a temporary reconciliation and admission that the charges against Browne had been grossly exaggerated. The problem of genuine reconciliation was, however, too much for them.

Thē was there whisperīgs, backbitīgs & murmurīgs priuily & amōg thēselues, also opēly greuous threats, taūts, reuilīgs & false accusations were rife in their mouths.

Some of them threatened to bring new charges against Browne, but he said, . . . they could not ioine with him in public praier & thāksgiuīg being at opē disagremēt & not first recōciled. This was coūted pre-sūptiō intolerable to be spokeē of him. And for that he charged some buisie bodies which were also blasphemers, not to come to the meetings, nether to his chāber in that maner he was greuously takē up & miscalled off diuers. Likewise for his wife there was much a doe, and for the power & authoritie which the Husband hath ouer the Wife. In this latter a doe R. H. was sick and came not abroad, but he had tales enowe brought vnto hi, for which he afterward made a great stirrīg & busines. But agaie their owē shame cōpelled thē to come to agreemēt & yet once more with one cōsent thei receaued R. B. for their lawefful pastor.⁶⁴

The ill feelings which had been engendered were too much for Harrison to forget. More tales were brought to him and he again absented himself, for which Browne proceeded once more to admonish him. Bitter words ensued. Whatever the merits of the original quarrel, the whole group had been forced into taking sides, and apparently the majority were by this time quite worn out by Browne's manner of dealing.

Then was he openlie accused & chalēged for an heretick & cōdemned as worse thē the pope & antichrist. The heresies laid against him were. . . :

1. Holding that children are not automatically members of the Church because their parents belong to it.
2. Holding that none can be counted God's people who have not given themselves to God and the Church, or been so dedicated by others.
3. Saying that England was Egypt, and that it was a sin to propose living there, when once free from it, even though the Magistrates might tolerate them.
4. Saying (which he denied having done) that those who had joined

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *T. & S. D.*, sig. C4 recto and verso.

the idolatrous worship practised in England, but had later renounced it, were members of God's outward Church.

5. Rebuking those who tolerated contemporary abuses by referring to what had been permitted under ancient law.⁶⁵

Browne's embittered self-defense concludes abruptly with the charge that Garrison and his supporters forsook him, sold his books, stopped the sale of what remained, intending to burn them, charged him with false debts, forced his sympathizers out of their lodgings and threatened to evict him.

Browne's account of the unhappy quarrel is the most detailed of any now known. As we have seen, it is definitely a self-defence, and yet it unwittingly reveals the fact that in Middleburgh as elsewhere, it took two to make a quarrel. Browne was undoubtedly an overbearing and exceeding difficult person. Obviously the relations between him and Garrison were poisoned by tale-bearing gossips as well as by temperamental incompatibility. Perhaps personal irritations within the Allens family also aggravated their troubles. The patent sincerity of each participant, and the heart-breaking trials of almost constant sickness and economic stress, made their ill-starred venture the more tragic to contemplate. After the rupture, Garrison wrote to an acquaintance in London. While he complained of the treatment he had received from Browne, he also verified Browne's contention that he interfered with the sale and distribution of his books. The letter is known only through being quoted some five years later by Stephen Bredwell, when he launched a bitter attack against Browne.

Indeede the Lorde hath made a breache amongst vs, for our sinnes haue made vs vnworthie to bears his great and worthie cause. M. B. hath cast vs off, and that with the open manifesting of so many and so notable treacheries, as I abhore to tell, and if I should declare them, you could not beleue me. VVhich because this sheete and many moe would not suffice to rehearse, I will meddle with no particular thing, to declare it. Only this I testifie vnto you, I am well able to proue, that Caine dealt not so ill with his brother Abel, as he hath dealt with me . . . Also I would admonish you to hake heede howe you aduenture your selfe to be a meane, to spread abroade any of that parties manifold heresie: and the other vpon the 23 of Matthewe, is a patterne of all lewd franticke disorder whoso haue eyes to see it. And I do not doubt but that the Lord will yet drieue him on to worse and worse, seeing he hath so notably fallen from him. Giu not your selfe ouer to be abused: the Lorde open your eyes, and giue you grace

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. C4 verso.

to take profit by my writing, euen as I do giue it with a well meaning mind to doe you good.⁶⁶

Browne's *True & Short Declaration* was probably written while he was still in Middleburgh, but it was probably not the first published reference to the quarrel, since we know that Harrison's *A Little Treatise vpon the firste Verse of the 122 Psalm* was in circulation in Bury St. Edmunds before June 1583. Harrison included in the treatise a statement which obviously referred to the schism as it was then developing. His words do not necessarily indicate that the final breach had occurred by that time, but they certainly reflect a good deal of bitterness towards the "one" who had displayed "Antichristian pride and bitternes."

And of late an other attempt haue bene giuen that waie by one of whom I must needs saie, that the Lord vsed him as a meanes to bring the trueth to light, in manie points concerning the true gournement of the church: who, I wish for the glorie of God, if it had ben his good pleasure, that he had stooide in integrity, without swaruing and leaninge to Antichristian pride, and bitternes. And for me to make thereof, may seme very hard, which am not so able therein to saue my self from the reproch of manie tongues, as I am to cleare my selfe of the deseruing the same.⁶⁷

The constant wrangling was too much for endurance. It became evident that Middleburgh was not large enough to hold both factions. Browne and his sympathizers decided to leave. But whither should they go? He had already spoken most positively against returning to England. Besides, not even Burghley's interest in him was guarantee of safety at this period. At the Bury St. Edmunds assizes in June, 1583, John Coppin and Elias Thacker were brought to trial on charges of denying the queen's supremacy, the evidence against them being that they had sold the treatises by Browne and Harrison. Far from trying to excuse themselves, the two men "commended all things in the saide books to be good and godlye," and were therefore condemned to be hanged. At their hanging, some forty copies of the books were burned.⁶⁸ In reporting the matter to Lord Burghley, Sir Christopher Wray said the men "were convicted for dispersing Browne's books and Harrison's books. . . . The book acknowledged her majesty *civilly*. But so was their terms, and no further."⁶⁹ Before the month was out, Elizabeth had

⁶⁶ S. B., *Easing the Foundation*, sig. A2 verso.

⁶⁷ Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters in the Light of Recent Research* (Cambridge, 1912), I, 106, quotes this passage from Harrison's *Little Treatise*.

⁶⁸ Dexter, *op. cit.*, 210, quotes from Lansdowne MSS. 38. (No. 64).

⁶⁹ Strype, *Annals*, III, 269.

issued a special proclamation in which she denounced "sundry seditious, scismaticall, and erronious printed Bookes and libelles . . . set foorth by ROBERT BROWNE and RICHARD HARRISON, fled out of the Realme as seditious persons, fearing due punishment for their sundry offences. . . ." She forbade citizens to possess or distribute any copies of the proscribed books, "as they tender her Maiesties good fauor, and will answere for the contrary at their vttermost perils, and vpon such further paynes as the Lawe shall inflict vpon the offendours . . . which her Maies- tie myndeth to haue seuerely executed."⁷⁰ Certainly it was not an auspicious time for either Browne or Harrison to travel to England.

In spite of previously expressed doubts about Scotland, it seemed the lesser of two evils; so in the late Autumn or early Winter of 1583, Browne sailed for Scotland having "in companie with him 4, or 5 englishmen and their wives, and famcleis."⁷¹ Landing at Dundee, where they seem to have received some support, they crossed over to St. Andrews, and there Browne "purchased a letter of commendateoun from Mr. Andrew Melvill to Mr. James Lowsone." Armed with this letter, they proceeded to Edinburgh, and took lodgings "at the heid of the Cannongate" on Thursday, January 9, 1584. Next Tuesday, Browne appeared "before the sessioun of the kirk of Edinburgh." Possibly he was invited to do so by Mr. Lawson, who was one of the prominent leaders in the Edinburgh Kirk, his admission into the ministry in Edinburgh having been one of the last functions in which John Knox participated before his death in 1572.⁷² The session would not admit Browne on probation, disliking both his views and his "arrogant manner." A week later, in conference with some of the Presbytery, Browne "alleged that the whole discipline of Scotland was amissee: that he and his companie were not subject to it, and therefore, he would appeale from the kirk to the magistrat." Lawson and John Davidson were thereupon appointed to examine his writings and prepare a case against him for examination the following Monday, and also for the basis of charges to be preferred to the king. The examination was postponed until Tuesday, January 28, and continued then until early morning. Browne acknowledged and

⁷⁰ *Queene Elizabeth's Proclamations* (Grenville Collection), fol. 225.

⁷¹ This and subsequent quotations in this paragraph are from Calderwood, *History of the Kirk of Scotland* (Woodrow Soc. ed., 8 vols., Edinburgh, 1843), IV, 1ff.

⁷² *Ibid.*, III, 230ff.

defended his writings. Complaint was thereupon made to King James against these troublesome strangers. "But they were interteaned and fostered to molest the kirk."

Calderwood's story does not mention any imprisonment, but Browne himself reported ". . . in Scotland, the preachers having no names of bishops, did imprison me more wrongfully than any bishop would have done."⁷³ Presumably, he was imprisoned temporarily, but he seems to have been released soon thereafter by order of the king. M'Crie claims that the whole affair shows that Scotland at that time had "an insensate and despotical government." He goes on to say, "The court took this rigid sectary under their protection, and encouraged him, for no other conceivable reason, than his exclaiming against the ministers, and calling in question their authority."⁷⁴

Although this statement by M'Crie betrays obvious prejudice, it is probably essentially correct. This was a time when the rival parties at the Scottish court were engaged in almost violent opposition. The question was whether the Presbyterian or the Roman Catholic factions would gain the king's favor. The former had become so deeply concerned over the boldness of their opponents that on August 22, 1582, they had removed King James by force to Ruthven Castle in the Highlands. So far as their ultimate purpose was concerned, however, this action proved to be ill-advised. A Stuart could not lightly pass over such an affront to his royal dignity. If he did not fly into the arms of his Roman Catholic advisers, he was at least greatly incensed against the Presbyterian lords. His resentment against this "Raid of Ruthven" finally took definite form in February, 1583/4, (just a month after Browne's defiance of the Presbytery). Andrew Melville, recognized leader of the Presbyterians, was formally banished from the kingdom.⁷⁵ Small wonder, therefore, that Browne, a potential source of annoyance to the Edinburgh Kirk, was quickly set at liberty by court authority. The confusion of issues which may result from a mixture of religious and political controversy is thus neatly illustrated, since those who encouraged James to set Browne free were undoubtedly the very ones who would have been the first to urge

⁷³ Browne's letter to his uncle, Mr. Flower, 1588 (published as *A New Year's Gift*, London, 1904), 26f.

⁷⁴ M'Crie, *Life of Andrew Melville* (Edinburgh, 1819), I, 325.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 265-294; *Dictionary of National Biography*, XXXVII, 232f; *Historical Memoirs of Andrew Melville* (London, 1830), 107-154.

his punishment under different circumstances. As for that, James himself wasted no love on such as Browne, "hauing at sundrie times come in Scotland, to sowe their people amongst vs."⁷⁶

According to Browne, he saw a good deal of Scotland, having "traveled it over in their best reformed places: as in Donde, Sct. Andrewes, Edenborowe, & sundrie other Townes."⁷⁷ It seems probable, however, that the implication is exaggerated. Perhaps he did do some further travelling, after he was set free from prison. He could hardly have spent many months in the country, however, because it is almost certain that he was back in the neighborhood of Little Casterton by the early summer of 1584, if not sooner. Apparently he had decided to take the risk of going into England in order that he might leave his wife at Tolethorpe Hall, where she seems to have been when their first child was born. The child was a daughter, whom they named Joan. The following February she was baptized at All Saints, Stamford.⁷⁸ Browne seems to have remained in hiding either in or near Little Casterton for some months, although it is possible that he may have been imprisoned during some portion of this time. Whatever the circumstances, he had left Tolethorpe Hall before February 8, 1584/5, for according to his own account he was "beyond the sea" on that date.⁷⁹

During this period from the summer of 1584 to the spring of 1585, Browne was at least in touch with friends, wherever he may have been. Powicke thinks he returned for a time to Middleburgh.⁸⁰ Burrage suggests that he was probably among friends at Norwich, and may have found it necessary to go abroad from there in order to escape arrest.⁸¹ It was evidently during this period that he received a communication from "M. Far & M. Har. Londoners," who asked his advice on listening to preachers who remained within the church. Bredwell, who tells the story, says that Browne advised them to listen critically to such preachers, examining and testing their doctrine.⁸² From

76 *Basilicon Doron or His Maiesties Instructions to His Dearest Sonne Henry the Prince* (London, according to the copie printed at Edinburgh, 1603), sig. A4 verso.

77 *A New Years Gifft*, 26; Bancroft, *A Sermon Preached at Paules Crosse, etc.* (London, 1588), 75.

78 Cater, "Robert Browne's Ancestors and Descendants" (*Trans. of C. H. S.*), II 155.

79 S. B., *Rasing the Foundations of Brownisme*, 142 (erroneously marked 102) f.

80 Powicke, *Robert Browne*, 40.

81 Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters*, I, 112.

82 S. B., *Rasing the Foundations*, 135.

some source he also received a letter which Thomas Cartwright had written to Harrison after Browne and his friends had sailed from Middleburgh to Scotland. Cartwright expressed the hope that Harrison would see his way clear to reuniting with those who sought to reform the church from within. Evidently the letter was written late in 1584. Browne said it had been in circulation some five or six weeks before he saw it. If Harrison had ever intended to reply in a public letter, his illness and death must have occurred to prevent his doing so. Browne, however, felt called upon to write an extensive reply which he certainly intended to have circulated, for he began with a formal "Address to the Reader," and included Cartwright's original letter with it for reference. This lengthy reply was an elaborate denial that the Church of England could be called a true church of God.⁸³

Someone published *An Answere to Master Cartwright; His Letter for Ioyning with the English Churches* in London. Browne disclaimed any connection with the publication of the *Answere*, although he admitted its authorship.⁸⁴ His denial may have been literally truthful, but it was certainly very much like quibbling. Even if he did not mean it to be printed, he certainly intended it to have some circulation. Perhaps he was simply trying to keep within the margin of the law which forbade publishing of seditious works, since he was already under grave suspicion. If so, he must have been very much dismayed to learn that it had been printed. Within a short time, he was taken into custody to answer for this new offence.

According to Bredwell, Browne was arrested "about Stamford."⁸⁵ Evidently he had written his manuscript, passed it on to some friend, and then departed for Tolethorpe Hall to see his family, since the time was drawing near for a second child to be born. Arriving at home, he found that only a few weeks had gone by since his wife had taken Joan to All Saints for baptism, in spite of his expressed wishes to the contrary. What scene transpired we can only guess. It seems reasonable to surmise that in her husband's absence, Alice Browne was persuaded by her father-in-law to have her daughter baptized while she was still getting around before the second child's birth. When

⁸³ Browne, *An Answere to Master Cartwright; His Letter for Ioyning with the English Churches* (London, 1585).

⁸⁴ Fuller, *Church History*, III, 63f, quotes a letter from Burghley to Brown's father (given below) to this effect.

⁸⁵ S. B., *Rasing the Foundations*, 135.

Robert arrived, then, to express his disapproval, there must have been many a long argument. Doubtless they would demand to know why he should make such a bother about these matters? Granting that he was sincere in his objections, where was it getting him, except into constant trouble?

Now, he had abundant opportunity to ask himself the same questions, for he was removed to prison, knowing that before long his wife's confinement must begin, and that his own situation was precarious in the extreme. Already Coppin and Thacker had paid with their lives for the views he had published. In addition, the queen herself had published a special decree of condemnation. Yet on top of all this, a new and almost equally objectionable tract was in public circulation. How could the author of such offensive works hope to escape the most severe penalty?

On sober thought, his own record must have seemed none too glorious. For some years he had been practically a constant fugitive from justice. He was very probably much concerned about the welfare and health of his family. His most earnest efforts had resulted in nothing but repeated wrangling and contention. Might it be that he was after all mistaken in the course he had been following? To add to all this, he was probably in wretched health.

To speculate thus about Browne's feelings is not mere fancy. We have already seen how discouraged he felt when he gave up teaching some seven years or so earlier. We shall have occasion to note at least one more occasion when he seemed intensely discouraged about his affairs, and wrote, "I am pore enough & broken to to much with former troubles, & therefore had no need of further affliction."⁸⁶ It need not be concluded that he was abnormal because of this. A man may be temporally of a volatile nature without being therefore pathological. Considering the state of prisons in his time, the mere fact of his repeated incarceration might be explanation enough to account for occasional wavering in his attitude. Whether this attempt to interpret Browne's actions is warranted by the facts, is naturally a matter of opinion. It is put forward here as the most satisfactory way to account for the fact that after all he had written and preached and suffered, he suddenly signed a subscription in which he acknowledged the archbishop's authority.

86 *A New Years Gifft*, 43.

Besides what we have written of Browne's own state of mind, we must also take into account the influence of his kinsman Burghley. Whereas it is not likely that Browne would have made submission either on his own initiative, or in response to Whitgift's authority, the terms of submission are typical of the kind of diplomatic compromise at which Lord Burghley was a past master. Either Browne or his family must have appealed to the Lord Treasurer for help in this very critical situation. In view of the serious possibilities involved, as well as the fact that he must have found it irksome to be repeatedly called upon to use personal influence in behalf of the young rebel, Burghley must have felt that the time was ripe to settle the problem once and for all. Let Whitgift's demands be reduced to the absolute minimum to which the archbishop would agree; and then let Browne be persuaded that he could accept these demands without unduly compromising his convictions. The result was a statement which could be interpreted to mean either more or less than it actually said. Bredwell, attacking Browne shortly after this, quotes what he says were the terms of the subscription, and also quotes Browne's defense of himself. Contradictory as Bredwell makes them seem, it is possible to believe that Browne's explanation was not only what he understood the document to mean, but was also tacitly accepted by Burghley and Whitgift as the basis on which he would be set free, providing he would never again publicly attack the church authorities. These two officials of church and state were men of the world, used to diplomatic procedure, and far more concerned about the appearance of conformity than about strictly orthodox belief.^{86a}

Bredwell says the subscription was in the following terms:

1. I do humbly submit myself to be at my Lord of Cant. commandmēt, whose authority vnder her Ma. I will neuer resist nor de-praue by the Grace of God &c.
2. Bredwell says that Browne later claimed to have agreed "that where the word of God is duly preached, and the sacramēts according ministered, there is the church of God."
3. Bredwell says the actual phrasing was:
Do you acknowledge the Church of England to be the Church of Christ, or the Church of God? and wil you promise to cōmunicate the same in praiers, sacramēts & hearing of the word? and wil you frequent our Churches according to law or no?

^{86a} This judgement of Burghley and Whitgift is based on Hume, *The Great Lord Burghley* (London, 1898), and the picture of Whitgift as given in Strype, *Life and Acts of John Whitgift* (London, 1718).

4. Will you promise also quietly to behaue yourselfe, and to keepe the peace of this Church: and that you will not preach nor exercise the ministerie, vnlesse you be lawfully called thereunto?
5. I refuse not to communicate in the Sacraments. For I haue one childe that is alreadie baptized, according to the order and lawe, and by this time in mine absence, if God haue giuen my wife a safe deliuerance, and the childe doe liue, I suppose it is also baptizet in like maner. Further my seruants being three doe orderly come to their owne Parish Church, according to the lawe, and communicate also according to the Lawe. To all these poynts that they are true, I do subscribe with mine hand and name, this 7. of October, Anno Dom. 1585.⁸⁷

Bredwell says that when taxed with this subscription Browne explained the baptism of the first child by saying "that it was done without his consent and contrary to an order he had taken and appointed; for it was baptized in England he being beyond the sea." As for the fact that his servants attended church, "he was not to force his seruants agaynst their conscience and custome, being newly come to him;" but personally, "he neuer came to the same Church with them, the parson being a common drunkard, and infamous by sundrie faults." He had agreed to abide by the law, but "there was no lawe to force him to take such a parson for his lawfull minister, neither to ioyne with him in the prayers and sacraments."⁸⁸

His contemporaries seriously impugned Browne's honesty in this submission. Bredwell said, "if all that is here sayde touching his subscription, bee melted together as in one lumpe, where shall wee finde a more perfect image of a pestilent schismaticke, and one more voide of all conscience, than is this Browne, though Rome it selfe be raked through to find him?"⁸⁹ Thomas Fuller, who used to see Browne occasionally in his own boyhood, was much disposed to doubt if the submission represented any genuine change of heart.

One may justly wonder, when many meaner accessories in this schism were arraigned, condemned, executed, how this Brown, the principal, made so fair an escape, yea enjoyed such preferment. I will never believe, that he ever formally recanted his opinions, either by word or writing, as to the main of what he maintained. More probable it is, that the promise of his general compliance with the Church of England (as far forth as not to make future disturbance therein) met with the archbishop's courteous acceptance thereof; both which, effectually improved by the countenance of Thomas, Cecil, earl of Exeter,⁹⁰ (Brown's near kinsman and patron) procured this extraordinary favour to be indulged unto him.⁹¹

87 S. B., *Rasing the Foundations*, 127-140.

88 *Ibid.*, 142 (erroneously marked 102) f.

89 *Ibid.*

90 Fuller confused his dates, thinking this was after the Lord Treasurer's death.

91 Fuller, *Church History*, III, 65.

We shall see that in the following year Browne agreed to certain articles required of him in order to obtain a teaching post at St. Olave's School. At this time, Browne added after his signature that he agreed with "distinctions & exceptions" named "before all the gouernours." As Burrage suggests, similar reservations were probably understood between him and Whit-gift.⁹²

Thus Browne won his freedom. Yet it cost him a high price. In the opinion of his contemporaries, he betrayed his convictions, and therefore sold his own soul. The judgement of posterity has been that from October 7, 1585, Robert Browne ceased to be the hero of the struggle between authority and freedom in the affairs of church and state. Probably the verdict of his immediate family connections was that Robert had finally begun to show a bit of common sense.

Lord Burghley hoped that his young kinsman would henceforth live quietly and with no disturbance against the laws. The day following the submission, he sent Browne to Tolethorpe Hall with a letter to the elder Browne, commending the presumably chastened rebel to his parental goodwill and patient consideration. Since Burghley had more or less given guarantee of Browne's good behavior, this sojourn at Tolethorpe was understood to be in the nature of a parole. In four months' time, however, Anthony Browne wrote to express despair at ever getting his son into a proper state of mind. He wrote to inquire if Robert might move from Little Casterton to Stamford. He would continue to accept the obligation of keeping an eye on his son, but the task of living under the same roof was too wearing to be continued. Burghley granted the request.

Burghley's two letters in this matter read as follows:

After my very hearty commendations: Understanding that your son, Robert Brown, had been sent for up by my Lord Bishop of Canterbury to answer to such matters as he was to be charged withal, contained in a book made by him, and published in print (as it was thought) by his means; I thought good, considering he was your son and of my blood, to send unto my lord of Canterbury in his behalf, that he might find what reasonable favour he could show him; before whom I perceive he hath answered in some good sort; and although I think he will not deny the making of the book, yet by no means will he confess to be acquainted with the publishing or printing of it. He hath besides yielded unto his lordship such further contentment as he is contented (the rather at my mo-

⁹² Burrage, *True Story of Robert Browne*, 58.

tion) to discharge him; and therefore, for that he purposeth to repair to you, I have thought good to accompany him with these my letters, and to pray you, for this cause or any his former dealings, not to withdraw from him your fatherly love and affection, not doubting but with time he will be fully recovered and withdrawn from the relics of some fond opinions of his; which will be the better done, if he be dealt withal in some kind and temperate manner. And so I bid you very heartily farewell.⁹³

After my very hearty commendations: I perceive by your letters, that you have little or no hopes of your son's conformity, as you had when you received him into your house; and therefore, you seem desirous that you might have liberty to remove him further off from you, as either to Stamford, or some other place; which I know no cause but you may very well and lawfully do, where I wish he might better be persuaded to conform himself, for his own good, and yours and his friends' comfort. And so I very heartily bid you farewell.⁹⁴

The happenings of the next few years in Browne's life have been variously reported by those who have written about him. Jeremy Collier, writing in 1714, stated that Browne was excommunicated by Bishop Lindsell of Peterborough, but gave no date.

Twas Lindsell Bishop of Peterborough's Discipline which brought him to this Recollection. The Bishop being inform'd that *Brown* lived at *Northhampton* and was busie in promoting his Sect, sent him a Citation to come before him; he refus'd to appear: Upon which contemptuous Omission he was excommunicated. *Brown* being deeply affected with the Solemny of this *Censure*, made his Submission, mov'd for Absolution, and receiv'd it and from this Time continued in the Communion of the Church.⁹⁵

Collier, it would appear, got the story from *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Ecclesiae Anglicanae* which had been printed in 1709. The author of this book claimed to have the story on good testimony, and referred to Browne as "the old gentleman."

Whilst this Dr. (Bayly) liv'd as Chaplain to Bishop *Lindsell* at *Peterborough*, one thing happened which ought not to be forgotten: I have it from a Grave and Reverend Divine now alive, who had it from his (Bayly's) own Mouth. The Story in short is this: The Bishop of *Peterborough* hearing, in his Visitation, that *Brown* the Ringleader of the *Brownists*, liv'd at *North-Hampton*, a Market Town in his Diocess, cited him to appear before him; but he neglecting, or refusing to appear, the Bishop, upon mature Deliberation, Excommunicated him. This so struck the old Gentleman, that he submitted himself to the Bishop, desir'd to be

⁹³ Fuller, *Church History*, III, 63f, gives the date as October 8, but incorrectly states that it was in 1584.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* The date is February 17, 1585/6.

⁹⁵ Collier, *An Ecclesiastical History*, (London, 1714), II, 582.

absolved, and being absolv'd accordingly, & re-admitted in the Church, never after left it.⁹⁶

The author further says that Bayly was once reprimanded by Dr. Hammond for a sermon in which he advocated excommunication "but when Dr. Bayly told him the Story of Brown, the Dr. was satisfy'd, and thank'd him for his learned Discourse."⁹⁷

Hanbury, writing in 1839, took the story from Collier, and further embellished it by fixing a time limit. He said it occurred before the Autumn of 1591:

Having been excommunicated for contempt by the bishop of Peterborough, he revolted from his disciples, and was protected and rewarded by Burghley, Sept. 6th, 1591, with the rectory of Achurch, Northamptonshire.⁹⁸

When Dexter published the results of his researches in 1880, he cited the excommunication story from Brook's *Lives of the Puritans*, and further narrowed down the date by saying it was between February 17, and November 21, 1586.⁹⁹ Crippen, who edited a reprint of Browne's *A Treatise of Reformation Without Tarrying for Any* in 1903, followed the lead given by Jessopp in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and stated positively that the excommunication occurred in the Spring of 1586. He therefore gave the bishop's name as Howland rather than Lind-sell.¹⁰⁰

In the face of such conflicting stories, Burrage attempted to work out an account which would satisfy the facts as they were known when he wrote his *True Story of Robert Browne* in 1906. Examining Dexter's version of Browne's career, he found the suggestion that Browne, having been a victim of temporary insanity, must have been in some institution for a period of about ten years following 1616.¹⁰¹ Burrage thereupon proposed the theory that it was during those ten years that Browne was under the shadow of excommunication. Evidence subsequently brought forward now permits us to state definitely that the excommunication of Robert Browne did not occur until 1631, while William Piers was bishop of Peterborough. It will,

96 *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Ecclesiae Anglicanae; or a collection of Tracts Relating to the Government and Authority of the Church* (London, 1709), xiif.

97 *Ibid.*, xiii.

98 Hanbury, *Historical Memorials Relating to the Independents, or Congregationalists* (London, 1839), I, 23f.

99 Dexter, *Congregationalism*, 81.

100 Browne, *A Treatise of Reformation* (London, 1903), 8; *Dictionary of Nat'l. Biog.*, VII, 60.

101 Burrage, *True Story*, 41-3.

therefore, be dealt with at further length when we come to Browne's final years. Suffice it here to say that contrary to the belief firmly held for some time, Browne certainly was not excommunicated in 1586.

On the other hand, he was in trouble with the church authorities during the months in question. On April 19, 1586, he was presented by the church wardens of Little Casterton to Richard Howland, bishop of Peterborough, on complaint that he "will not come to the Churche." His wife was cited on the same charge, and they were to appear before the bishop's official "in the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary within the Cathedral Church of Peterborough." The case was continued on May 5. The third and last mention of the matter is June 25, when it was stated that the bishop had taken the matter into his own hands, and had had a personal interview with the accused.¹⁰²

Powicke points out that since it was the wardens of the Little Casterton church who made the complaint, we may conclude that Browne and his wife had not gone to Stamford, even though Burghley had given permission for them to do so. Moreover, it seems probable that it was this minister whom Browne had described as "a common drunkard and infamous by sundrie faults" and whom "there was no laws to force him to take . . . for his lawful minister. . ." The fact was probably notorious, and so extreme that the bishop had no desire to make an issue of the case against the recusants.¹⁰³

After a lapse of several months, we find that Browne was elected Master at St. Olave's School, Southwark, on November 21, 1586. Fourteen of the governors of the school agreed to his appointment "vpon his good behauour & obseruinge theise artycles her vnderwritten."

1. That you shall not intermeddle yourself with the minister or ministry of this parish, or disturb the quiet of the parishioners, by keeping conventicles or conference with any suspected persons.
2. That you shall bring your children to sermons and lectures in the church; and there accompany them for their better government.
3. If any error shall be found in you and you convinced thereof, that you shall upon admonition thereof, revoke it and conform yourself to the doctrine of the Church of England.

¹⁰² Cater, "New Facts Relating to Robert Browne" an article in *Transactions of the C. H. S.*, II, 239f. Cater, who at this time rejected the excommunication story entirely, thought it was based on this case against Browne.

¹⁰³ Powicke, *Robert Browne*, 43f.

4. That you shall read in your school no other catechism than is authorized by public authority.
5. That you shall at convenient times communicate in this parish according to the laws.
6. Not being contented to answer and keep these articles, not longer to keep the schoolmastership, but to avoid it.

Browne added, with his signature, that definite "distinctions & exceptions" were mutually understood as included with these provisions.¹⁰⁴

Within two years of being accepted at St. Olave's School, Browne was under fire from two directions. Stephen Bredwell, a physician who remained loyal to the church although seeking its reform, was convinced that Browne was a hypocrite who needed to be exposed. At the same time, John Greenwood and Henry Barrow, two Separatist leaders who were in prison for their disobedience to ecclesiastical law, engaged in a written controversy with Browne, whom they not unnaturally looked upon as a renegade.

Bredwell, having indulged in several exchanges with Browne, published the collection of his own contributions to the controversy in a book which he entitled, *The Rasing of the Foundations of Brownisme*. The book bore only the author's initials, "S. B." and was printed in 1588. The series of tracts which it included were obviously written during a period of at least several months, with a lapse of time sufficient for Browne to circulate his written replies, which Bredwell would then attack in the next section. Inasmuch as Browne was under strict obligations not to engage in any printed controversy which might be judged prejudicial to the church, he was distinctly handicapped in this particular dispute. However, we can tell at least some of the substance of what he wrote by the highly critical comments which Bredwell makes.

A certain "W. F." whom Bredwell describes as "a certaine disciple of Robert Browne" had written to explain that he refrained from church attendance because both government and discipline of the Church of England were contrary to scriptural injunctions.¹⁰⁵ Bredwell's first contribution (which he prints

¹⁰⁴ Burrage, *True Story*, 44f., quotes the complete document from the "Minute Book of St. Olave's School."

Dexter, *Congregationalism*, 81f., cites Waddington. Browne received £20 per annum.

¹⁰⁵ S. B., *Rasing the Foundations*, 1f., "The doubts and obiections of a certaine disciple."

after an "Epistle Dedicatore" and a section "To the Christian Reader") argues that while various reforms were urgently needed, the church still deserved respect and loyalty, since righteous worshippers could still find true fellowship with the Lord, regardless of the presence of wicked folk.¹⁰⁶ This reply was shown to Browne, and elicited a written retort, to which Bredwell next wrote "A seconde Answere or reioynder to Brownes replie."¹⁰⁷ Citing Browne's "brainlesse answere to Master Cartwrights letter," he said that Browne knew as well as anyone that the church had authority to cast out unworthy offenders. The task, indeed, must be performed by the church, and not by individuals, since that would merely institute "Brownes Anarchie." To say that a church was no longer under the covenant because it failed to separate the unworthy, was to defend the heresy of justification by works. Browne's position showed lack of common sense, he said. ". . . it seemeth the author . . . was not wel in his wittes, but malice had made him as those in Bedlam, that talke quite out of order and sense."¹⁰⁸ And as for the suggestion that refusal to advance reforme should be exposed even at risk of one's life, he said that such talk came with very poor taste indeed from a man with Browne's record:

We know, whatsoeuer he discourses otherwhere of his fugitive life, that although some others haue been hanged for his heresies, he hath not onely bene contented to let them go without his companie, but comming also to some triall of his courage before authoritie, there was not onely no shew of that Heroical spirit, which he woulde haue you see in his writings, but contrariwise, shifting answers, with subtil reseruations, shamefull and disorderlike giuing backe from the trueth it selfe, and finally a most hypocriticall subscription, least hee should haue felt affliction in the least of his fingers.¹⁰⁹

Bredwell had meanwhile written a "Detection of Ed. Glov-
ers hereticall confection . . . together with an admonition to the
followers of Glover and Browne." His charge that all of Glover's heresies were but the outcome of Brown's teachings, so
angered Browne that he wrote a long reply divided into 120 num-
bered sections. Declaring that he had "bene by this Libell, all bit-
ten and torne, as it were with a mad dog," Bredwell wrote "A
Defence of the Admonition to the followers of Browne: made

106 *Ibid.*, 3-10. "The First Answere."

107 *Ibid.*, 11—(number not printed)—60. "The Second Answere."

108 *Ibid.*, 41.

109 *Ibid.*, 50f.

in reply to a raging Libell of Brownes, sent abroade, in sundrie written copies, against the same.¹¹⁰

Browne, he said, argued that a distinction must be made between the regenerate part of a man (which does not sin, though the man do so), and the unregenerate (which is condemned even though the man be justified in Christ). This, said Bredwell, was "a playne axiomaticall contradiction. The whole is good, a part is euil. Browne is sound, his braine is sicke."¹¹¹ By elaborate argument, he reached once more the conclusion that Browne was making discipline take the place of faith in justification.

This Troublechurch Browne, not receyuing the loue of the trueth, touching the being of a Church in Christ by faith, but striuing for other groundes and essentiall causes thereof . . . is . . . compassed about with a strong delusion.¹¹²

The degree of exasperation which Bredwell's attack aroused in Browne is indicated by quotations which he gives from Browne's "Libell," involving violent personal abuse.

The hypocrisie of rayling F. and Bredwell with their partners, is hid- den in rich mens houses, sometimes in deceyful fastings, as though we should haue present reformation, and sometimes in delicate feastings, in bribes, gifts, shew of alms to the poore, when all goeth into their own bellies or purses.¹¹³

It is thy maner and thy partners, to force, to threaten, to make stir- rings, and hurlie burlies and to drieve man and wife asunder. Thine and their outrage cannot be satisfied with bloud. Thine and their raylings, slauders, and false accusations, haue brought diuerse of vs to death, some by Gibbet, some by long imprisonment, some by flight and pursuit, some by extreame care, death and sicknesse: some by seas, some by necessitie and want, some by chaunging aire, dwelling and place. The bloud of all these shall bee vpon thine and thy partners heades.¹¹⁴

Bredwell's reply to this attack was to taunt Browne with having called England Egypt, and having thereafter returned thither. Also he had condemned the Church of England in the strongest terms, only to make his own subscription afterwards.

Must not that wo cleave fast vnto him, that was denounced against those that laid importable burthens vpō other mens shoulders, but thēselues touched thē not with the least of their fingers? Full many of his poore

¹¹⁰ S. B., *Rasing the Foundations*, 61-145, "A Defence of the Admonition."

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 65. Dexter and Crippen offer this as proof that Bredwell, a physician, considered Browne insane!

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 112.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 115.

disciples lie in prisons, whilst he laugheth at liberty, and touching that, for which they suffer, addeth afflictio to their bonds, by all his behauior.¹¹⁵

He then quoted Browne's subscription, insisting that despite Browne's attempted self-defense, the wording of the subscription makes no distinction about acknowledging only the civil authority of the bishops. Recalling Browne's own words to Harrison about the bishop's licenses being "trash and pollutions," he said that when Browne was recently presented for recusancy by the parish minister of "S. Toolies in Southwarke" he hastened to seek the protection of a "Doctor and iudge of such courts." Further, Browne's attack (quoted above) was evidence that he still associated himself with those in revolt against the church, in spite of having subscribed two years previously. As for that, his conduct was additional evidence, since he had failed to attend church; and when the case was pressed against him, "remoued his dwelling into another parish, & left a troublesome stink behind him in their church."¹¹⁶ All this, Bredwell reiterates, was after acknowledging the Church of England to be the church of God. "This I so lay downe, that the slipperie shifter should not thinke to escape me, by drawing an interpretation from these wordes, to his conuenticles at his pleasure."¹¹⁷

Two specific acts of disobedience are then given as evidence against Browne. One was the case of "a poore . . . seelie woman" whom Browne deliberately encouraged to break the law, and to denounce an excommunication against her. The other was a conventicle not far from Ludgate, which Browne attended, and at which he preached, offering as his defense, that he had been "earnestly requested vnto it by those that were present."¹¹⁸

Bredwell had begun to prepare his book for publication when he learned that his opponent had been engaged in controversy by Barrow and Greenwood. Being convinced that Browne's subscription was quite dishonest, he was at a loss to comprehend what he found now in reply to these two notorious Independents. Bredwell is not the only one who finds the tone of Browne's writing in this case difficult to understand. When Burrage discovered the manuscript of the reply to Greenwood and Barrow, it had written upon it in pencil the suggestion that it must have

115 S. B., *Rasing the Foundations*, 126.

116 *Ibid.*, 134f.

117 *Ibid.*, 138.

118 *Ibid.*, 139f.

been written by Cartwright rather than Browne. Nevertheless, from internal evidence, and specifically from comparison of quotations given by Bredwell, Burrage was sure that it must indeed be the long-lost answer made by Browne. Burrage published it in 1907, under the title *The Retraction of Robert Browne*, giving an account of finding it in Lambeth Palace Library.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, so recent and careful a writer as Scott Pearson has expressed doubts as to whether Browne could really be its author.¹²⁰ Careful examination of the manuscript and the evidence presented, seems to leave little doubt, however, that this was indeed written by Browne, and must be the writing which so perplexed Bredwell.

Under the circumstances, we must do our best to understand this unexpected defense of the Church of England by one who had so bitterly attacked it. The explanation would seem to lie in the fact that Browne's problem here was much different from what he had previously been facing. Hitherto, he had been opposed to those who were staunch defenders of the established church. Now, however, it was incumbent upon him to defend his own action in subscribing to Whitgift. Since controversy always tends to drive its participants to the most extreme limits of their positions, Browne now found himself having to answer the very line of argument which he had previously advanced. To ask why he did not frankly admit the contradiction, and say that he had come to look at matters differently, is to ask why Browne was not someone else. No man finds it easy to weigh himself accurately in judgment. Certainly Browne was never a man who could freely admit that he had been wrong or even mistaken. He had not gone so far as that for the archbishop. Why, then, should we expect him to do so for Barrow and Greenwood, who attacked him as a renegade?

The fact that he felt himself to be on the defensive in this argument is plainly discernible in what he writes. Deplored the presence of sinners in the church, he explains that no mortal man is perfect, and that therefore we should be charitable in our judgments of all men, including ministers. Though some are open to criticism, not all should be condemned on this account.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Browne, *A Reproofof Certeine Schismatical Persons, and their Doctrine touching the Hearing and Preaching of the Word of God*, written in 1588; published under the title, *The Retraction of Robert Browne* (Oxford, 1907).

¹²⁰ Pearson, *Thomas Cartwright*, 312.

¹²¹ *The Retraction*, 3f, 19-21, 27ff, 51f, 63.

Indeed, even those who are wicked may have some measure of God's truth revealed to them. Otherwise, conscience could accomplish nothing.¹²² The fact that the first Reformers received faith, even though they heard the preaching of only those who were unreformed must be added proof of this, as must also the fact that these opponents of his had received their faith even in a corrupt church. Hence, to refuse to listen to an imperfect spokesman is to reject that portion of the legitimate message which God has revealed to him.¹²³

As for the bishops, their authority may not be utterly denied. The civil state recognizes their lawful authority. Since their jurisdiction is over a multitude of matters which are essentially spiritual and ecclesiastical, they may be rightly recognized as responsible for church matters as well as civil affairs.¹²⁴ Besides, their office demands respect whatever may be said of the individuals who occupy it.¹²⁵ Since the law allows reasonable complaints, made in a decent and proper manner, these officials cannot be properly called tyrants.¹²⁶

Compared with the vigor of his earlier attacks, this defense by Browne is feeble at best. One cannot avoid the feeling that he had no real enthusiasm about it. Whitgift might force him to submit to his authority, but Browne's whole life indicates that in his heart he always believed that the church should be superior to any of its officers.

Bredwell's version of this controversy between Browne and Barrow and Greenwood is characteristic:

Among all the leaders of opposition to the church, "there is none . . . that can iustly take the garland from Rob. Browne; . . . they must, euen Barow and Greenwood, with the rest, acknowledge him the shyp of their store, and the steele of their strength . . . In doctrine I knowe they differ, but diuersitie of practice was cause thereof . . . Hence cometh that grudge, quarrell and heart-burning among them, They expostulate with him as a coward, and one that shrinketh in the wetting. He againe nippeth them for their eagernes, in running before their olde maister, and thereby obscurring his light, as though the truth (forsooth) had first bin reuealed by them. . .¹²⁷

It is not certain whether Browne left St. Olave's shortly

122 *Ibid.*, 4ff, 10-16.

123 *Ibid.*, 6ff, 22, 26f, 35ff, 51.

124 *Ibid.*, 29f, 55f.

125 *Ibid.*, 59-63.

126 *Ibid.*, 56ff.

127 S. B., *Rasing the Foundations*, sig. A recto and verso.

before or after the publishing of Bredwell's books. Burrage suggests that his retirement from the school may have been caused by this attack.¹²⁸ In any event, our next certain date in his life is the very end of this year 1588, when he wrote a letter to "Uncle Flower."¹²⁹ This gentleman seems to have written him for a statement concerning "names & titles, auctoritie & gouernment" in the church, with special attention to "presbyter" and "elder." Inasmuch as Bredwell belonged to the Puritan group within the Church of England, and since Browne had consistently opposed this party, it is probable that Browne's friend asked him to write in order that he might have a statement which would serve to counteract the effect of Bredwell's attempted exposure. Although Browne might not be orthodox in all his opinions about the church, his views on Presbyterian practise would surely make a favorable impression on the authorities of the church. Thus, in spite of Bredwell's attack, Browne's fears that he might be further condemned to punishment were not justified.¹³⁰ "Uncle Flower" promptly passed the letter on to Whitgift and others, with the result that on February 9, 1588/9, Richard Bancroft, preaching at Paul's Cross, quoted this letter and also "a treatise against one Barowe," of which we have no other evidence than this.

Remembering Browne's account of his first encounter with Bancroft, when he brasenly defied him and his authority, we cannot but be struck by the irony of having this ancient enemy quoting Browne's words. It is obvious that Bancroft did so with a keen sense of the absurdity of the situation.

Yet for your better understanding, what to thinke of this kinde of government (for never a barrell will proove the better herring) you shall heere the opinion of one of our owne countrie men, who was in Scotland about the same time, and observed verie diligentlie the wonderful pride and insolence thereof. "I judge," saith hee, (writing of this Parliament now assembled) "that if the Parleament should establish such names, and those the officers according to those names which seeke their owne discipline, that in stede of one Pope we should have a 1000, and of some Lord Bishops in name a 1000 Lordly Tyrants in deed, which now do disdaine the names. This I have found by experience to be true: I can testifie by triall of Scotland, which have travelled it over in their best reformed places: as in Doudee, Saint Andrewes, Edenborough, & sundrie other townes: and have knownen the king in great danger, and feare of his life by their lordly dis-

128 Burrage, *True Story*, 62.

129 Published under title: *A New Years Gifft* (London, 1904).

130 *Ibid.*, 43.

cipline, &c." and againe : "I have seen all maner of wickednes to abound much more in their best places in Scotland, then in our worser places heer in England."

Further it may please you brethren to heare the same mans judgment of such, as do labor so busily in this matter : in a treatise of his against one Barowe. "Whereas you charge us" (saith he) "in denieng Christ in his offices, and consequently not to be come in the flesh : it shall appeare by your presbyterie or eldermen, that indeed you are and will be the aldermen even to pull the most ancient of all, Christ Iesu himselfe by the beard; yea and seeke not onely to shake him by the lockes of his haire out of his offices, but also all his ancients under him, I meane the lawfull magistrates and ministers which have lawfull authoritie from him."

• • • • •
 This mans opinion heerin I know will be greatly contemned, because I think he hath bin of another judgement. But yet they may give him leave to speake, as his experience (which is no foolish master) hath taught him, For commonly it comes to passe, when rash men run hedlong into any new devises that *posteriore cogitationes solent esse sapientiores*: their afterwits are best. Howbeit let him finde what favor at their hands he shall. I must indeed confesse, that if this matter had onely depended upon his report, or opinion, I would not at this time have made mention of him. But it is far otherwise.¹³¹

It is not surprising to learn that the publicity given to these assertions by Browne did not enhance his popularity either in Scotland or among the Presbyterian and Separatist groups in England. King James, who obviously did not relish the reference to himself, wrote some fifteen years later his own unflattering opinion of Browne. He followed the time-honored custom of dismissing the man with the most opprobrious epithets which occurred to him at the moment: "Anabaptist" and "Family of Love."

... as to the name of Puritanes . . . the stile thereof doth properly belong onely to that vile sect among the Anabaptists called the Familie of loue. . . Of this speciall sect I principally meane, when I speake of Puritanes; diuers of them, as Browne, Penrie, and others, hauing at sundrie times come in Scotland, to sowe their popple amongst vs (and from my heart I wish, that they had left no schollers behinde them, who by their fruities will in the owne time be manifested). . .¹³²

An anonymous retort to Bancroft was soon in print. It is generally attributed to John Penry, and is thought to have been printed by Waldegrave in Edinburgh about 1590, at the time when both author and printer were in exile in Scotland because

131 Bancroft, *A Sermon Preached at Paules Crosse the 9. of Februarie, being the first Sunday in the Parleament, Anno 1588* (London, 1588), 75f.

132 *Basilicon Doron*, sig. A4 verso.

of their connection with the *Marprelate Tracts*. It insisted that no right-minded man would think of quoting such witness in defense of a statement so slanderous.

Browne, a knowne Schismatike is a man very fit to be one of your witnesses against the Eldership. His entertainment in Scotland was such as a proud vngodly man deserued to haue. God giue him and you repentance, if it be his will, otherwise you shall make an hard reckoning both of you, before the iudgement seate of Iesus Christ, for the slauders which you haue raised vp against the gouernment of his kingdome heere vpon earth.¹³³

The next six months in Browne's life are without any known traces by which we can tell where he was living. Some time about June, 1589, he must have interviewed Burghley in London. On the twentieth of that month, the Lord Treasurer gave him a letter to Bishop Howland of Peterborough, recommending that since he had become "dutiful and conformable" he might be given an opportunity to prove himself in some church.

To the Rev. Father in God, my very good Lord the Bishop of Peterborough. After my very hearty commendations to your Lordship: Although it might seem somewhat strange that I should write to your Lordship in the favour of this bearer, Robert Browne, who hath been so notably disliked in the world for his strange manner of writing and opinions held by him; yet seeing he hath now a good time forsaken the same, and submitted himself to the order and government established in the Church, I have been the rather moved to recommend him to your Lordship's favour, and to pray you if haply any conceit may be in you, that there should remain any relics in him of his former erroneous opinions, your Lordship would confer with him, and finding him dutiful and conformable, as I hope you shall, to receive him again into the ministry, and to give him your best means and help for some good, and am not a little glad at the reclaiming of him, being of kindred unto me, as your Lordship, I think, knows. And so I very heartily bid your Lordship farewell.¹³⁴

Bishop Howland evidently did not share Burghley's optimism, for he made no move whatever to carry out this request. Powicke concludes from this letter that Browne was now ready to subscribe to the whole Prayer Book, for the sake of finding peace and quiet.¹³⁵ We may, perhaps, assume that Browne's own arguments against Barrow and Greenwood had led him to the

¹³³ *A Briefe Discovery of the Untruthe and Slanders (Against the True Government of the Church of Christ) contained in a Sermon preached the 8. of Februarie 1588 by D. Bancroft* (Probably printed in Edinburgh, 1590), 44.

¹³⁴ Hanbury, *Memorials*, I, 24, quotes (with corrected spelling) Lansdowne MSS. 103 (No. 60). Hanbury thinks Burghley used Browne as his own tool.

¹³⁵ Powicke, *Robert Browne*, 48.

point where he perceived that he could not logically stand against them, and at the same time refuse to enter the fold of the established church.

During the years that his mind was most active in seeking the correct formulation of church government according to scriptural plan, Browne was also interested in the general problem of education. His two experiences as schoolmaster reveal the fact that both religious and secular education claimed his attention. Since he was convinced that the Bible contained all the necessary rules and provisions for the perfect church, it is hardly surprising that he looked to the same source for a complete plan for all education. The theory had previously attracted his notice, as is to be seen in *A Treatise vpon the 23. of Matthewe*, where Browne roundly criticizes the formal practice of logic and rhetoric, so commonly followed in the universities of his day.

... Paul disputed, but did he vse syllogismes? Christ also disputed, and had he such Logike, and when he harde and posed the Doctours did he shew anie such skill? ... Paul . . . saith: *O Timothie keepe that which is committed vnto the, and auoide prophane and vaine bablings and oppositions of science falsole so called.*¹³⁶

Saloman was so wise, yet had hee no wisdome in their definitions, nor vnderstanding of such Definitions . . . his way of studying and searchinge out of things was by minding and pondering them, *one by one*, by turning himselfe to beholde wisedome and madnes and follie, yea by experience especiallie . . . And to this labour he sendeth them, but not to Rhetorick and Logike.¹³⁷

As for Moses learning, which they say was in Rhetorick and Logike, because he knewe the wisdom of the Aegyptians, they wolde teach vs that he allowed vaine Artes . . . the Aegyptians, the Chaldeans, and the Children of the East, the Grecians, and the Romanes knewe such things, but they had not the true knowledge. *For when they professed themselves to be wise (saieth Paule) they became fooles.*¹³⁸

The *Philippians* hadde both learned, and receyued, and hearde, and seene in Paule, what things soeuer were true, or honest, or iuste, or pure, or partayned to loue, or had good reporte, or vertue, or prayse in them, and were commaunded to thinke on those thinges as they had learned and scene them in Paule. But did Paule teach them by Diuisions, to leape beyonde the middes before they had the right beginning? . . . Howe often doeth Paule falle into this question of the Rhetorick and eloquence of the *Corinthes*, and of vaine wisedome, such as the *Grecians* delighted in.¹³⁹

136 Browne, *A Treatise vpon the 23. of Matthewe* (Middleburgh, 1582), sig. D3 verso.

137 *Ibid.*, Sig. E verso.

138 *Ibid.*, Sig. E verso.

139 *A Treatise vpon the 23. of Matthewe* Sig. F verso.

I thought good to write these thinges, that in hādling of the scriptures, we might take heed of such vanity & knowe that our wisdom to saluation, is by the holy scriptures & not by vaine Logike, as Paule doth teach vs.¹⁴⁰

Although his attention had been largely absorbed by other matters during the intervening years, during 1589 and 1590 he seems to have given thought once more to this problem of education. With his fondness for drawing up tables and definitions, which he exercised at great length in *A Booke Which Sheweth*,¹⁴¹ he prepared "Latine tables and definitions," in which he explained his theory. These he sent to Burghley, urging him to show them to certain bishops, and perhaps other learned men as well. Less to our surprise than to his, they were "neglected, or through greater business forgotten." After a period of impatient waiting, he composed a treatise on these "tables and definitions," which on April 15, 1590, he sent to Burghley, along with a letter which is all that is now known to survive as evidence of this matter.

He had, he said, "altered the arts, and the rules and termes of art, by evidence of the word: and corrected many errors of al our Professors." He was prepared to defend his thesis "against the multitude of philosophers, doctors, and writers heretofore." If only Burghley would help him, he would demonstrate how in one year scholars could learn from the Bible what they could scarcely learn in ten years at the universities! Logic, grammar, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music, metaphysics, ethics, economics, politics, all these as taught in the universities would be confuted and corrected in one year.

And if it were not, that I am become odious to many for the truth sake, I would . . . in very short time perfect them in the former studies . . . I mean, if I were authorized to read public lectures, and make profession accordingly. For as Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, and Pythagoras, made many thousand scholars . . . I woulde hope, by your Lordships good countenance onely, to perform much rather the like: and that in al quietnes also: not meddling to condemne or controwl any learned man, or any kind of profession.¹⁴²

Burghley obviously did not give him the slightest grounds for hope on this score. He was, as we have seen, certain that

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Sig. F2 verso.

¹⁴¹ Browne, *A Booke Which Sheweth the life and manners of all true Christians and how unlike they are unto Turkes and Papistes and Heathen folke* (Middleburgh, 1582).

¹⁴² Lansdowne MSS. 64 (No. 34) quoted by Strype, *Life and Acts of John Whitgift*, III, 229f.

Browne would do well in a parish; but he had no illusions about this short-cut to universal knowledge. In Dexter's opinion, this letter confirms the theory that Browne's mind was disordered.¹⁴³ As Powicke points out, however, he was only carrying to its logical conclusions a view of the Scripture which was common among the Puritans of his day.¹⁴⁴ As a matter of fact, a further instance of the sort of treatment of scripture which is out of keeping with accepted ideas today is to be found in Browne's letter to "Uncle Flower," where he speaks of how the markings on certain fish verify a passage in Revelations.

The "Kings of the East," he says, are the Protestants, since the lands in which they live are eastward from Spain and Rome. This reasoning disproves the mistaken idea that the Turks and barbarians are the ones referred to. "I have proued in a seueral treatisse in latine, touching the herring Fishes hauing a writing of letters vpon them, taken in the east seas, that they signifie the princes of the protestants."¹⁴⁵

It should be borne in mind that Browne was now about forty years of age. He was naturally discontented with long periods of idleness; he was in none too good odor with the church; and twice he had terminated teaching engagements under personal suspicion because of his views. He wanted to instruct the minds and souls of others. Indeed, he felt definitely called to the task. But all paths seemed barred. Small wonder, then, that he tried to work out a scheme whereby he might follow his calling without running foul of the hindrances which had so far balked him. His plan may not commend itself to us any more than it did to Burghley, but we can at least understand the motives which impelled him to suggest it.

Evidently it was during the next twelve months or so that Anthony Browne, Robert's father, died. Thereupon, Robert's eldest brother, Francis, inherited Tolethorpe and its attendant patronage of the church at Little Casterton. Francis offered this living to Robert. "On the thirtieth day of June, Anno Domini 1591, Robert Browne, clerk, was admitted and instituted to the rectory of the ecclesiastical parish of Little Casterton, in the County of Ruthland and diocese of Peterborough."¹⁴⁶ He

143 Dexter, *Congregationalism*, 122.

144 Powicke, *Robert Browne*, 49.

145 *A New Years Gifft*, 35.

146 Cater, "New Facts Relating to Robert Browne" in *Transactions of the C. H. S.*, II, 240f; Serjeantson, *History of the Church of St. Giles, Northampton* (Northampton, 1911), 194. Both cite Institution Book of the Diocese of Peterborough.

was serving as rector at the time of the bishop's visitation in that year, but by late summer he had removed to the parish of Achurch-cum-Thorpe Waterville, in Northamptonshire. He was succeeded at Little Casterton by his brother, Philip, who was instituted in the month of November, 1591.

The living of Achurch-cum-Thorpe Waterville had reverted to the patronage of the crown, which meant, in effect, that it was Burghley's to do with very much as he might choose.¹⁴⁷ He presented Browne to the rectory of Achurch on August 24, 1591. On September 2, Browne was admitted and instituted by the bishop of Peterborough. "On the last day of September, 1591, Robert Browne, Bachelor in Arts of Corpus Christi Cambridge, was admitted to the holy orders of deacon and priest."¹⁴⁸

Thus did Robert Browne make his final gesture of surrender to the ecclesiastical order, some dozen turbulent years after declaring of the bishop's authorization that he "abhorred such trash and pollutions." That he was prepared to accept the system is further borne out by the fact that barely two months after his ordination, namely on December 6, 1591, he brought suit against one John Backhouse, for withholding tithes.¹⁴⁹

The troubled years which we have been noting in the life of Robert Browne were all within the first half of his life. Although the remaining forty years were not without conflict, they were, comparatively, quiet and uneventful. So far as the main stream of English civil and religious life were concerned, Browne was practically buried at Achurch. His name lived on as a by-word, but his personality was never again intimately associated with it in the public mind. Twenty months after he had become settled at Achurch, Parliament was exercised over the problem of dealing with the "Brownists"; and Barrow, Greenwood, and Penry, who were looked upon as ring-leaders in the sect, were sent to the gallows. But the man whose name had become a term of opprobrium was simply forgotten.

For a period of nearly twenty years, life seems to have gone smoothly at Achurch, and we may hope it was well and happy. Robert and Alice Browne, settled quietly in the rectory of Achurch, apparently devoted their attention to the parish and to their growing family. Browne, who appears to have been de-

¹⁴⁷ Cater and Serjeantson, *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Serjeantson, 194.

terminated that no complaints should arise concerning him, kept neat and careful record in the parish register, printing each name in large and clear old English style, and taking great pains to make any needed corrections with utmost care. His first entry was December 22, 1591, and from that date his entries continue regularly for twenty-five years. Among other items, he noted in due order the baptisms of six children born into his family.

The names and years were: Frauncis, 1592; Thomas, 1593; Bridget, 1595; Grace, 1598; Alice, 1600; John, 1603. His eldest daughter, Joan, was married in 1606, and was the mother of five children before her death in 1627. His eldest son, Anthonie (baptized at All Saints, Stamford, "May xvi" in 1585, shortly before Robert signed his submission to Whitgift) was married in 1614; and before Robert's death, there were eleven children in Anthonie's family. Thomas was twice married, and was the father of four children before Robert died. William Browne (who was married at Achurch in 1623, and may have been a child of Robert and Alice, born before they came to Achurch) had four children. Thus records exist of eight (perhaps nine) children borne to Robert by his wife Alice; and before Robert died he had twenty (or twenty-four) grandchildren.¹⁵⁰

In the absence of evidence to the contrary, it seems reasonable to suppose that the score of years following his institution at Achurch were years of domestic peace and happiness for the family of Robert Browne. The records in the register seem to indicate a state of general good will in the parish as well. Dexter, having seen the book, observed that Browne had at times added comments to the regular entries, and concluded that these were "uncalled for" and "severe," and therefore further indication of an unsettled mind.¹⁵¹ Cater, however, goes carefully into the matter, giving extensive quotations which surely bear out his contention that Dexter's conclusions were scarcely warranted.

The comments made by Browne consist largely of briefly identifying facts, such as "widdow", "a servant of ours", "a beggar boy", "farmer", "cottager", "shepherd", "A stranger who came frō Waddenho & died at his brothers house", "gentlewoman & widdow", "bachellar", "laborer", "an aged man", "an ould poore maied."

Perhaps Dexter objected to the fact that when Browne baptized children born out of wedlock he noted that fact as well. However, the standards of propriety in Victorian days can hardly be used as a test for the

¹⁵⁰ Facts on Browne's family and church register are based on two articles by Cater, "Robert Browne's Ancestors and Descendants," *Trans. of C. H. S.*, II, 151ff; and "Robert Browne and the Achurch Parish Register," *Trans. C. H. S.*, III, 126ff.

¹⁵¹ Dexter, *Congregationalism*, 122.

vocabulary of Elizabethan times. That Browne was not insensitive to the tragedies of a rural parish is indicated by two entries for the year 1603:

Christnings Nouem 26 An Dawkins saied to be the daughter of one Williā Dawkins of unknown dwelling.

Burials Dec. 2 An Dawkins ye child of a sorowing womā called Juda Stāley alias Dawkins.¹⁵²

The above examples are a fair indication of the nature of the unusual comments made by Browne, all of which Cater says he has cited. Certainly they are far from indications of mental incompetency on Browne's part. On the contrary, they stand as silent witness that during all these years, Browne justified Burghley's faith in his capacity as a parish priest.

From the meager evidence which we have concerning Browne's private affairs between 1580 and 1610, it appears certain that his wife Alice must have been a woman of fine loyalty and noble spirit. She evidently endured much discomfort and trouble for his sake during the early years of their marriage. She also seems to have exerted a truly steady influence over him. It was apparently her moderating influence which helped to keep peace with the ecclesiastical authorities, as in the baptism of Joan and Anthonie; although the instance of presentation at Little Casterton seems to indicate that she shared her husband's unwillingness to worship at a church whose minister failed to command their respect. Then after they had settled at Achurch, it was probably due to her patient helpfulness that their life was both calm and pleasant. Undoubtedly it was not only a great loss to him, but also a considerable tragedy for his remaining years, when she died in June, 1610.¹⁵³ The tranquillity which had characterized nearly twenty years of life at Achurch did not long endure after Alice's death.

Following an interval of two and a half years, Robert Browne remarried. His second wife was a widow of Stamford, named Elizabeth Warrener. The license secured by them on February 5, 1612/13, was made out for "Robert Browne Clerk, Rector of Achurch & Elizabeth Warrener of Stamford St. Martins, widow." Permission was granted for the marriage to be "either at Achurch or Stamford St. Martins."¹⁵⁴ Nine days later they were married. The clerk at St. Martins evidently knew Browne's connections with Tolethorpe, but was not aware of

¹⁵² Cater, "Robert Browne and the Achurch Parish Register," 127-133.

¹⁵³ Dexter, *Congregationalism*, 117; Powicke, *Robert Browne*, 51.

¹⁵⁴ Cater, "The Later Years of Robert Browne" in *Trans. of C. H. S.*, III, 303.

his being an ordained clergyman, for the record is: "Robert Browne, gent, & Eliz. Warrener, married Feb. 14th."¹⁵⁵

In the absence of full information it is, perhaps, unfair to blame this second marriage for the fact that Browne soon began to get into difficulties in his parish. Remembering his early life, we may marvel that nothing of the sort had previously happened at Achurch. It is, however, a striking coincidence that the death of Alice, with whom he had lived peaceably at Achurch, should be followed not only by his remarriage but also by difficulties both in his home and in his parish. Doubtless Browne was not an easy man with whom to live. Perhaps it was asking too much of Elizabeth Warrener to suppose that, with both of them well past their youth, she should be able to live harmoniously with him in a parish which had, presumably, learned to love and trust his wife Alice. Possibly it is surprising that malicious gossip did not become unbearable until a year and a half had gone by. At last, however, the first break occurred when one of the parish, William Lynhall by name, was brought to court for spreading slander.

Presented before the Surrogate's bench on October 12, 1614, Lynhall was suspended "for speaking of unreverent speeches of Elizabeth Browne the wyfe of Mr. Robert Browne or minister."¹⁵⁶

Prosecuting the one who engages in gossip is not, however, a certain means of settling all the conflicts of which the gossip may be only an indication. It soon became apparent that all was not well either in Browne household or in Achurch parish. The sad facts concerning the domestic troubles may be quickly stated. Within a year of the case against Lynhall, Browne was cited in the court of the archdeacon of Northampton on two counts: "our parsonage houses to be in decay and 4 Tenants dwelling in them" and "for not being resident on his parsonage."

The case was first recorded, October 17, 1615, and was revived in the two successive years, although it appears that Browne never again occupied the parsonage, since it fell into such decay that his successor, the Rev. Peter Asheton, D. D. was forced to build a new rectory in 1633.¹⁵⁷

Although Browne evidently separated from his wife within the year after Lynhall's plain speaking, she lived on for a time in the parsonage, where her conduct seems to have been open to

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 304.

¹⁵⁷ Cater, "The Later Years of Robert Browne," 304.

such suspicion that in 1618 she was brought into court on a charge of grave misconduct.

On October 14, 1618 "Mrs. Eliz. Browne and Bartholomew Smith of Wadenhoe" were cited "for keeping Companie together in the parsonage house of Thorpe Achurche as the fame goeth, in the nighte . . ." She was simultaneously charged with John Broughton of Pilton. After two months of failing to appear as ordered, she came to court and paid fines for previous absences. At the same time Broughton was formally cleared of all charges of misconduct. What became of the case involving Bartholomew Smith is not revealed in any known document.¹⁵⁸

Five years elapsed, of which no known records exist to shed any light on Elizabeth Browne's movements. Then on October 29, 1623, she sued her husband for restitution of conjugal rights. Although notice was served on him, he ignored it. Three times the case was called in a space of six weeks, and then drops from the record.¹⁵⁹ The inference is that Browne refused to have anything to do with his wife, then or thereafter.

While this domestic tragedy was in progress, Browne was also in difficulties in the parish. So far as is known, he had observed the required forms in his conduct as minister at Achurch during the first twenty years of his incumbency. The archdeacon's visitation records for the rural deanery of Oundle have not been preserved for the years prior to 1607, but Browne's record is included from that year, and shows fairly regular attendance until 1617.

In 1607 he did not appear, for some reason, but all was regular for the four years following. In 1612 he was not present, but was excused when his curate Thurlbie, presented excuses for him. He was next absent in 1615, and was suspended until he should pay a fine, which he evidently did in a short time. He was thereafter restored to official favor. The following year, he and his curate, Henson, were both present. For the next ten years, however, he was absent, although his curates did appear; and no official comment was made concerning Browne's absence.¹⁶⁰

It is not clear exactly what happened during the decade from 1616, except that some sort of breach had occurred in the parish. The parish register for that year reveals the fact in the case of two records of baptism and one of burial, to which are added the comment "in schisme." A third baptismal record originally included the "schisme" entry, which was later scratched

158 *Ibid.*, 305.

159 *Ibid.*, 306.

160 Cater, "The Later Years," 307; Serjeantson, *op. cit.*, 195.

out. It was in the previous year that Browne was first cited for having left the parsonage, and for having let the building fall into decay. The explanation appears to be that a split had occurred in the church, the exact nature of which we do not know, and Brown removed himself both from his wife and from his parsonage, to take up residence in another section of his parish. Then, on June 4, 1617, "his lordships officer" began a suit against Browne.¹⁶¹

The natural inference is that Browne had become lax in his observance of the required forms of worship and ecclesiastical order. We have already observed that when he subscribed thirty years before, his subscription seems to have indicated little, if any, change of conviction as to the essential nature of the church. He promised to make no disturbance; and that promise he had kept. Now, however, the even tenor of life was completely disrupted by the death of his first wife, and by his stormy second marriage. Feeling, no doubt, uprooted, he appears to have sought the company of those most congenial to him, with the result that his inclinations towards freedom of worship were encouraged, and the breach with those of differing views thus made wider.

This interpretation of what occurred seems to be supported by the fact that when his curate, Arthur Smith, appeared before the Archdeacon in Browne's absence in 1617, he was disciplined because when "asked by His Lordship's judge if he have worn the surplice, admitted he hath not since he served the cure." He was reprimanded, but absolved, after being ordered "to weare the surplice every Saboth, and to do other rites and ceremonies accordinge to the booke of Comon prayer."¹⁶²

It would seem that Brown's old obstinacy reasserted itself, and that, refusing to give satisfaction to the ecclesiastical court for the charges against him, he was "suspended ab execucone officii sui clericalis."¹⁶³ He would be still officially the rector of Thorpe Achurch, but he would be for the time being suspended. This, then, would account for the fact that his absence would not be commented upon in the archdeacon's records, provided his curate appeared as his acting substitute.

¹⁶¹ Cater, *Ibid.*, 308; *Dictionary of National Biography*, XV, 380, gives Fuller as authority for saying that although Bishop Dove was twice charged with remissness for allowing silenced ministers to preach, he had a reputation for great strictness. Perhaps some of the "schisme" party bore tales of Browne's laxness to him.

¹⁶² Cater, "The Later Years," 307; Serjeantson, *op. cit.*, 195.

¹⁶³ Cater, *Ibid.*, 308. This is what actually occurred instead of the excommunication suggested by Burrage, or the detention suggested by Dexter.

For four years, Smith was present as required, and no comments were recorded with reference to Achurch. Smith was instituted vicar of Oundle in 1621, in which year the Record Book bore the comment "Mr. Smith gon from Achurch." His place at Achurch was taken by John Barker. The record for 1622 remarked "There is a strange preacher," Barker, as curate, duly appeared for the next three years; Browne continued to be absent.¹⁶⁴

According to persistent tradition, Browne spent this decade from 1616 to 1626 in a thatched house at Thorpe Waterville. Cater found it still known as "The Old Chapel" and "Chapel House." He was told that it formerly bore the date 1618 on its chimney, and that according to local tradition "a parson of Achurch was turned out, built this chapel house, held services there, and ended his days in gaol."¹⁶⁵ This explanation also accords with Fuller's remarks about Browne, whom he remembered seeing during boyhood days spent in his father's parsonage at Aldwinkle, near Achurch, and whom he reports as having "a wife with whom for many years he never lived . . . ; and a church, wherein he never preached . . ."

For my own part, (whose nativity Providence placed within a mile of this Brown's pastoral charge,) I have, when a youth, often beheld him. He was of an imperious nature; offended, if what he affirmed but in common discourse were not instantly received as an oracle. He was then so far from the sabbitarian strictness to which some preciser Brownists did afterwards pretend, that both in judgement and practice he seemed rather libertine therein. In a word, he had in my time a wife, with whom for many years he never lived, parted from her on some distaste; and a church, wherein he never preached, though he received the profits thereof.¹⁶⁶

Incidentally, it was probably some similar account of Browne's domestic troubles which Robert Baillie of Glasgow received, after it had passed through several re-tellings, in the form of an assertion that Browne used to beat his wife. When we remember the common willingness of men to credit the worst about a man whose views they do not like, we are disposed to regard this bit of gossip with great scepticism. Moreover, we may feel certain that opponents in the church would surely have raised the charge against him, had any grounds for it existed in fact.

The course of his life, to his deep old age, was so extremely scandalous, that more than ordinary charity is needful to persuade that ever he was led with a good spirit. I have heard it from reverend Ministers, that

¹⁶⁴ Cater, *Ibid.*, 307.

¹⁶⁵ Cater, "New Facts Relating to Robert Browne," 243 ff.

¹⁶⁶ Fuller, *Church History*, III, 65.

he was a common beater of his poor old wife, and would not stick to defend publikely this his wicked practice; also that he was an open profaner of the Sabbath¹⁶⁷

Dexter quotes from Pagit a further embellishment of the tale to the effect that whenever taxed with the error of such conduct, Browne's defence was that "he did not beate her as his wife, but as a curst old woman."¹⁶⁸

If, as seems probable, Browne spent some ten years as leader of a separated congregation at Thorpe Waterville while still officially connected with the parish church at Thorpe Achurch, some incident, of which we have no hint whatever, must have arisen to change his policy in the spring of 1626. On Palm Sunday of that year, he seems to have resumed his former custom of conducting services at Achurch, as though nothing had happened. It may well be that his return was prompted by some conflict with his curate, Barker. For we discover that although his church wardens accepted his return complacently, Barker and one Thomas Olyver, complained to "his lordship's officer," who brought suit against the church wardens on April 26, 1626.

The charge was that despite Browne's suspension, which had never been revoked, they tolerated him when he "did notwithstandinge upon Palme Sonday last reade dyvine service & preache on the same daye." Moreover, "upon the 15 of Aprill now instant beinge the Sabothe daye he did reede prayers & preache and Administer the Sacramente in the Churche there."¹⁶⁹

Serjeantson thinks that the church wardens probably escaped with a reprimand on this occasion. Evidently Browne made some sort of peace with the authorities, for his part, since there appears to be no further mention of his suspension. Furthermore, he resumed the custom of keeping parish records in his own hand.¹⁷⁰

Whether there were changes among the church wardens in the next two years, so that they no longer agreed to his laxness, or whether they were themselves threatened with another suit, is not certain. However, Browne's own wardens presented him on November 8, 1627, "for not using of the crosse in baptism, & for not wearinge of the surplice, & for omittinge of some parte of the booke of common prayer." That the old breach in

167 Baillie, *A Dissavise From the Errors of the Time* (London, 1645), 14.

168 Dexter, *Congregationalism*, 88, quoting Pagit, *Heresiography* (ed. 1654), 58. Hanbury, *Memorials*, I, 24, quotes the first edition (1645).

169 Cater, "The Later Years," 309; Serjeantson, *op. cit.*, 196.

170 Cater and Serjeantson, *Ibid.*

the parish was not healed by Browne's return to the pulpit is clear in the fact that he proceeded to bring suit against several of his parishioners.

Thomas Sanders was presented "upon a fame for givinge the Minister evill speeches in the Churche." He asserted in defense "that that wch Mr Browne sayd to him in the Church was A lye." The case, however, went against him. He was suspended from entering the church, and ordered to perform a penance.

On the same day, nine adults, including Thomas Olyver and his wife, and also the Olyver children, were presented for "absenting of themselves" from the Parish Church.¹⁷¹

For two years the unhappy situation continued, evidently become more bitter as time passed. In the Autumn of 1629 it once more reached the point of an open break, with Browne again making "schisme" entries in the register. Two of them relate to christenings, and two other to burials. As in the case of Middleburgh, one is moved with combined irritation and pity for Robert Browne. In this instance, the tragedy seems all the greater because it follows upon so long a period, first of apparent harmony in the parish, and later of at least mutual toleration of differences. Now, after nearly forty years of life at Achurch-cum-Thorpe Waterville, the eighty-year-old pastor is seen bringing his life to a close amid bickering and hard feelings. Moreover, the bits of evidence reveal heart-breaking tragedy running through it all.

Three christenings in 1629 are noted as having taken place at Lilford. One was a daughter of Thomas Saunders, the man whose son had been christened at Lilford in 1616, with an entry of "schisme" which was scratched out. The 1629 entry has no such comment. One of the two remaining is the pathetic case of the infant son of Allen Green, who lived but six days, and was not buried at Achurch.

October 25, 1629, "Allen Greenes child baptized in schisme at Lyllford named John."

October 31, 1629, "Allen Greens child buried in schisme."

(The other "schisme" entry under "Burials" is the name of John Cranfeald "who liued, dyed & was buried in schisme.")¹⁷²

The other side of this quarrel is shown in the archdeacon's book under the date of November 19, 1629, wherein are cited various

¹⁷¹ Cater, *Ibid.*

¹⁷² Cater, "Robert Browne and the . . . Register," 135.

complaints against Browne, especially the charge that he refused either to baptize or to bury Allen Green's infant.

Thorp Achurch Magrum Browne Reorem ibm. Presentatur for that he refused to baptize the child of Allen Greene & turned it from the church.

Magrm Browne predictum: Presentatur for that he refused to bury the dead.

Other complaints against him are: "for that he doeth not read divine service according to the booke of Common Prayer," "for that he doeth not wear the surplice;" "For that he doeth not use the Crosse in baptisme."¹⁷³

These were charges which could not be lightly dismissed by the church officials. Browne did not appear to answer them, but his son John appeared and swore "that his ffather is not able to come to this courte without danger of his healthe." The case was therefore postponed for three weeks. On December 10, 1629, the court sat again, and this time Thomas Browne swore to his aged father's incapacity to attend. Four weeks later, January 7, 1629/30. Browne again failed to appear, but nothing seems to have been done in the matter.¹⁷⁴ Meanwhile, however, he continued to keep his parish register, and among entries for 1630 is recorded the baptism of "a child of my ungracious godsonne Robert Greene baptized els were in schisme."¹⁷⁵

The Greene family and others, who opposed the rector, were not disposed to let the case drift unnoticed. On December 4, 1630, Allen Greene and Robert Dust presented arguments to William Piers, recently consecrated bishop of Peterborough,¹⁷⁶ that since the summons had long ago been duly served, Browne should be declared contumacious for having ignored the order to appear, and should accordingly be excommunicated. The bishop, for special reasons ("ex causis eum specialiter movendis") would not deal with the case directly. He ordered the archdeacon's court to take it up again.¹⁷⁷ This was done at Oundle on December 16, 1630. Browne made his appearance, and was instructed to have his answer to the charges ready at the next sitting of the court. As instructed, he appeared with his defence on January 12, 1630/31. He was told to present himself a fortnight later, when the case should be settled at last. The court

173 Cater, "The Later Years of Robert Browne," 310.

174 Cater, "The Later Years," 310.

175 Cater, "... Browne and the ... Register," 136.

176 He had been dean of Peterborough for eight years, and then was consecrated as bishop on October 24, 1630. *Dictionary of Nat'l. Biography*, XLV, 272.

177 Piers must have known of the 10 years' suspension as well as other circumstances connected with the dispute at Achurch.

met, January 26, but Browne failed to appear. His name was called thrice, but without response. He was thereupon declared contumacious, and subject to the usual fines. Witnesses against him were admitted by the court, and were told to have their case against him in proper written form for the court's next sitting. They did as directed, and the testimony was duly examined by the court on February 17. The result is made obscure by the legal phrasing employed.¹⁷⁸

Cater, having discovered these facts in the "Archdeacon's Official Book," came to the conclusion that Robert Browne was not actually excommunicated. He was especially convinced of this because he found that Robert's brother Philip, whether through coincidence or otherwise, was under charges at the same time, in the same court. The records show that Philip, being also charged by Greene and Dust, and also failing to appear, was excommunicated at the January 26 sitting of the court.

What Philip had been doing for the previous twenty-six years, we do not know. When Robert Browne left Little Casterton to go to Achurch, Philip was his successor, as we have already noted. After some thirteen years, however, he was deprived of the living at Little Casterton because of nonconformity (in 1604). We next find traces of him when Green and Dust proceeded against him at the same time as they were prosecuting his younger brother, their rector. Philip was ordered to appear at Oundle on December 16, 1630, the day that Robert's case was revived by order of Bishop Piers. Although Robert appeared that day to answer charges, Philip remained absent. Thereupon, Philip was warned to present himself on January 12th, or suffer excommunication. On that day, when Robert offered his own defence to the court, Philip was again not present; wherefore, he was excommunicated. When Robert failed to appear two weeks later, and was declared contumacious as a consequence, the record concerning Philip declared, "Browne remains excommunicated." On February 17th, it was reported that he had been denounced in church "in festo Natalis Domini 1630" and "remains excommunicated."¹⁷⁹

Following this research by Cater, investigation by Serjeantson brought to light still further facts regarding Robert Browne, and the case against him. That case did not lapse as Cater had supposed. After an interval of eight months, it was again revived. On October 17, 1631, Browne was cited to appear and show cause why he should not be deprived of his benefice. The case was carried along through November 3, and 17, and December 2. Then, on December 15, 1631, the Instance

¹⁷⁸ Cater, "The Later Years," 311f; Serjeantson, *op. cit.*, 196f.

¹⁷⁹ Cater, "The Later Years of Robert Browne," 313f.

Book of Peterborough Registry recorded, "Robert Browne stands excommunicated;" in addition, the sequestration of his benefice was considered. On March 15, 1632, he was stated to be still excommunicate. One April 5, he was cited, on petition of Allen Greene and Robert Dust, to appear "in the Lady Chapel of Peterborough Cathedral, on May 29th next . . . to be removed, deprived, and inhibited from his Rectory of Achurch for non-conformity (*propter ejus inconformitatem*)."¹⁸⁰ Notice to this effect was personally served upon him at Achurch on May 23, as Roger Mason testified on May 31. He was thereupon called thrice, but did not appear. The bishop (William Piers) heard the case in person. Evidently still willing to give Browne every possible chance, he rejected a motion that the accused be declared contumacious. Instead, he gave him a further opportunity to appear at a court to be held in September, 1632. The page on which the record of the September court should have been entered in the Instance Book was left blank. It appears, however, that the living of Achurch was officially sequestered,¹⁸⁰ "Wm. Duste, Nicholas Blackwell, and Wm. Fesant" being appointed sequestrators, since they produced their accounts at a court held March 14, 1633. Meanwhile, on December 7, Allen Greene and Robert Dust had applied for expenses incurred in the prosecution of Robert Browne, and were duly paid on January 24.¹⁸¹

Further record of the case of Robert Browne exists in the reports for 1633. On March 28, R. Woodruffe and Thomas Saunders stated that Mr. Browne, the sequestered rector, had been suspended and excommunicated by the Reverend Father in God, William (Piers) late bishop of Peterborough, that the fruits and tithes of the said rectory had been sequestered by the same bishop into the hands of certain parishioners, and that the sequestration should be continued so long as the suspension and excommunication remained in effect. The three original sequestrators resigning, three successors were appointed. Since the curate, Mr. Lewis, whom Piers had appointed to Achurch, was retiring, Thomas Aspin, M.A. was appointed to serve "during the suspension and sequestration of the said Robert Browne." The sequestrators were ordered to pay forty marks a year as stipend to Aspin, applying the balance to:

¹⁸⁰ The following month, Piers was translated to Bath and Wells; *Dict. of Nat'l. Biog.*, XLV, 272.

¹⁸¹ Serjeantson, *op. cit.*, 197, quotes Instance Book of Peterborough Registry.

1. The sowing and tilling of the rectory glebe land.
2. The needful expenses of management.

Any residue thereafter was to be given to Mr. Robert Browne for the sustentation of himself, his wife and his children.¹⁸²

While the records quoted so far are such as reveal primarily the activities of those opposing Browne, especially Greene and Dust, there is evidence that the parish was not unanimous in all this affair. The Correction Books of Peterborough Registry reveal the cases of eight persons so far out of sympathy with the proceedings against Browne that they violated the sequestration of the Rectory in August 1633.

On August 15, John Hartwell admitted carrying away some hay, even though forbidden to do so by one of the sequestrators. He was excommunicated.

William Browne, Maria Lovell, Eleanora Covington, and Hugh Treves were excommunicated for similar cause.

On August 22, John Browne confessed to having violated the sequestration, and performed the required penance.

On August 26, Hugh Treves and Maria Lovell, confessing their guilt, sought absolution from the sentence of eleven days before, and were restored.

On the same day, Robert Kinge of Pilton pleaded guilty to removing "some halfe a dozen loades of haye."

Mr. Bottomley of Pilton confessed "that he did pitch the cart one the behalfe of Mr. Browne, and by that maner did violate his Lordship's sequestracion." He was duly penitent, and was absolved.¹⁸³

The indication of these facts is that Browne was still about during late August, 1633. Therefore, it must have been either at the end of the Summer or early in the Autumn that Robert Browne suffered the final ignominy of arrest and imprisonment, on complaint of "my ungracious godsonne Robert Greene." Fuller, who tells the tale in his own sprightly manner, adds that Browne died in Northampton jail.

As for his death in the prison in Northampton, many years after, (in the reign of King Charles, *anno* 1630) it nothing related to those opinions he did or his followers do maintain. For as I am credibly informed, being by the constable of the parish (who chanced also to be his godson) somewhat roughly and rudely required in the payment of a rate, he happened in passion to strike him. The constable (not taking it patiently as a castigation from a godfather but in anger as an affront to his office) complained to Sir Rowland St. John, a neighboring justice of the peace, and Brown is brought before him. The Knight, of himself, was prone

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 197 f.

¹⁸³ Serjeantson, *op. cit.*, 198f. quotes Correction Books (Peterborough Registry).

rather to pity and pardon, than punish his passion; but Brown's behavior was so stubborn, that he appeared obstinately ambitious of a prison, as desirous (after long absence) to renew his familiarity with his ancient acquaintance. His *mittimus* is made; and a cart with a feather-bed provided to carry him; he himself so infirm (about eighty) to go, too unwieldy to ride, and no friend so favorable as to purchase for him a more comely conveyance. To Northampton jail he is sent; where, soon after, he sickened, died, and was buried in a neighboring churchyard; and it is no hurt to wish that his bad opinions had been interred with him.¹⁸⁴

Baillie, not content with the version which Fuller gives, declares,

his injustice, in not paying the small pittance he was indebted to him whom laziness in his Calling made him keep for the supply of the cure of his Parsonage, did bring him to prison, in the which, for that very cause, he continued till death.¹⁸⁵

This final imprisonment of Robert Browne could not have lasted more than five or six weeks at most, for the parochial register of St. Giles' Northampton, declares:

"Mr. Browne, Parson of Achurch, was buried the viijth of October, 1633."¹⁸⁶ Elizabeth Browne (whatever she may have been doing through the long years previously) made arrangements for his funeral. The church warden's account of St. Giles' reports:

"1633. Received of Mrs. Browne of Ayechurch for ye great bell . . . 0 1 0."¹⁸⁷

Serjeantson's research, which thus settled the question whether Browne was really excommunicated, and where and when he died, was published in 1912, and brought an immediate acknowledgement from Cater, who cited extensive passages from Serjeantson's book in an article in the *Transaction of the Congregational Historical Society*.¹⁸⁸ Both Cater and Burrage¹⁸⁹ also paid tribute to the discovery of what seemed convincing evidence that Browne was reconciled to his wife Elizabeth at some date before his death. The item by which the matter appeared to be clinched was a will which Serjeantson found among the records at Somerset House, in which Browne

¹⁸⁴ Fuller, *Church History*, II, 66.

¹⁸⁵ Baillie, *A Dissuasive*, 14.

¹⁸⁶ Serjeantson, *op. cit.*, 201.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ *Transactions of the C. H. S.*, V, (1912).

¹⁸⁹ Burrage, "The Early English Dissenters", I, xiii.

left "all my goodes, chattles, and estate whatsoever unto my deare and loveinge wiffe Elizabeth Browne, who hath ever bine a most faithfull and good wiffe unto me."

On October 19th, 1633, administration was granted to Elizabeth Browne, widow of Robert Browne, clerk, lately Rector of Achurch, in the County of Northamptonshire.

A nuncupative will was exhibited, and proved in April 1634. It read as follows:—

Memorandum that upon or about the First daie of October in the yeare of our Lord God one thousand, sixe hundred and thirtie three, Robert Browne, late of the Parish of Thorpe Atchurc, in the Countie of Northton, clerke, deceased, haveinge an intent to declare his will nuncupative whoe should have and enjoy those temporall goodes which God in Mercie had blest him withall, exprest his will therein in manner and forme followeinge . . . Vidlt I doe give and bequeath all my goodes, chattles, and estate whatsoever unto my deare and loveinge wiffe Elizabeth Browne, who hath ever bine a most faithful and good wiffe unto me. And I will, and my mind is, that none of my children shall have or enjoy any parte of my said estate, and to that end I have securitie to shewe from some of them. But if anye person shall thinke or saie that I have not delt like a Father with them, I doe hereby lett such know that I have heretofore myselfe advanced, preferred and given unto each of them more than their due, and proportionable part of and out of all my said estate. These wordes or verye like in effecte were spoken by the said Robert Browne being in perfecte mind and memorie in the presence of us whose names are hereunder written. Signum Willelmi Browne, John Coles.¹⁹⁰

It is obvious on the face of it, that this is an extraordinary document. Its sentiment accords neither with the facts, so far as we know them in respect to the domestic relations of Robert and Elizabeth Browne, nor with what we have seen of the personality of Browne. Nevertheless, here was the document, duly recorded at Somerset House, and therefore legally acknowledged. What could the historian do other than conclude, as Burrage did, that this declaration by Browne was "an entirely unexpected and welcome statement"?¹⁹¹

The mystery was resolved in 1927 by A. G. Matthews, who examined documents of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, where he found not two but three steps reported in the case of Robert Browne's estate. 1. Elizabeth Browne took out letters of administration on October 19, 1633, claiming that her husband had died intestate. 2. On April 21, 1634 she had the "nuncupative will" proved in court. Thus far, we have what

¹⁹⁰ Serjeantson, *op. cit.*, 201 f.

¹⁹¹ Burrage, *Early English Dissenters*, xiii.

Serjeantson found recorded. Matthews, however, found that three years later Robert Browne's son John won a suit in which he challenged the validity of the will which his step-mother had produced. Therefore we have one final move recorded. 3. On May 20, 1637, the court promulgated a long Latin decree, declaring the "nuncupative will" null and void. Elizabeth Browne was charged with £240 of the goods of the said Robert remaining in her custody; she is to pay the costs of both parties."¹⁹²

Thus ended the long and stormy career of Robert Browne, who was so often the center of controversy during his life, and still was so after death claimed him. Having failed to make any lasting friendships among those who might be sufficiently articulate to defend his name and reputation, he was for many years known to posterity by little save the unflattering reports of his opponents. By those who shared Bredwell's opinions, he was considered a charlatan and hypocrite. By those who honored Barrow and Greenwood, he was regarded with contempt as an utter renegade. By those who were partisans of the Presbyterian movement in Scotland, he was held to be a common liar and traducer. By the Church of England authorities, he was looked upon as at best as embarrassing adherent, and at worst as an incorrigible rebel. Nearly two hundred and fifty years elapsed after his death, before Dexter was so confused by the apparent inconsistencies in the man's life that he could only arrive at the charitable opinion that Browne was a brilliant man, unfortunately touched by insanity.

It may well be that further details will yet be discovered to shed light on various aspects of Browne's life. So far as the writer is aware, however, the foregoing account is as complete a picture of Robert Browne as is possible to present in the light of facts now known. The man thus revealed stands out as both strong-willed and strong-minded. The virtues, and also the defects, which such a nature implies were his. His spirit of independence was so highly developed that his capacity for co-operation was correspondingly diminished. Finding it almost impossible to work in harmony with other people, he was doubtless his own worst enemy. Consistency was no more his characteristic quality than it is of most men. Partly on this account, and partly because of his manner, he must often have been a maddeningly difficult person with whom to deal.

¹⁹² *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, X, (1927), 8ff.

At the same time, he wins our sometimes grudging respect for the persistent way in which he refused to be overawed by entrenched authority. Reminding Bancroft from his sick bed that it was not the Privy Council's letter which induced him to leave off preaching at Cambridge; defying the bishop of Norwich; telling the Edinburgh Presbytery "that the whole discipline of Scotland was amisse"; grudgingly admitting Whitgift's power, while still refraining from disavowing his opinions as to the ecclesiastical system; refusing to worship in a church whose minister he considered entirely unworthy; repeatedly ignoring citations to appear at ecclesiastical courts; accepting excommunication rather than conform to what he had always believed in his heart were "trash and pollutions"; and finally riding off to jail on a featherbed in the bottom of a cart rather than give in to what he evidently considered an impertinence on the part of his godson: these are not the sort of things which make a man deeply loved by those who must have dealings with him. Nevertheless, they are all in character. They belong to the life of a man who was convinced that the individual is precious in the sight of God, and of equal importance with any king or priest. His frailties are apparent for all men to see. They need not, however, obscure the fact that there was a robust, if rebellious, spirit of independence in the man. That quality may have been his undoing, but it was also the outstanding contribution which he made to the thought of his time, when religious and political ideals of high importance were in the process of formation.

THE RISE OF MONASTICISM IN THE CHURCH OF AFRICA

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An important development in the life of the church of Africa during the last decade of the fourth century and the first quarter of the fifth century was the rise of monasticism, first instituted, inspired, and directed by Saint Augustine. A lively consciousness of sin and the comparison of his sensual life with the career of several exponents of monachism had resulted at the time of his conversion in a strong ascetic reaction to his former mode of thought and life.¹ In succeeding years the saintly bishop lost none of the ardor for asceticism which marked his conversion, largely because his active imagination continued to dwell on his earlier life and to magnify his former sins and shortcomings out of all proportion, so that he was ever driven to make atonement by "newness of life." Divorcing himself entirely from his former career, Saint Augustine with some of his friends returned to his birthplace, Thagaste in Numidia, and there he founded on his own lands the first African monastery,² and endowed it with that portion of his patrimony which he had not yet given to other charities.³ For three years he dwelt there "with those who had also consecrated themselves to God, in fastings and prayers and good works, meditating day and night in the law of the Lord."⁴ Soon after he had been ordained priest under compulsion at Hippo in 391, Saint Augustine founded there a second monastery for men on property provided by the aged Bishop Valerius.⁵ As bishop Augustine continued to live in the

1 Especially Anthony the Hermit and two friends of Augustine's acquaintance, Ponticianus. *Confessions*, VIII.

2 By Africa is designated the Roman Diocese of Africa, which comprised from east to west Tripolitana, Byzacenum, Proconsular Africa, Numidia, Mauretania Sitiensis, and Mauretania Caesariensis. Mauretania Tingitana was joined with these provinces ecclesiastically although it belonged to Spain politically.

3 Possidius, *Vita Sancti Augustini*, III; Augustine, *Epistula*, 126.7 (CSEL, XLIV, 12-13).

4 *Ibid.*

5 Augustine, *Serm.*, 355.I.2 (PL, XXXIX, 1570).

community, and by establishing other houses for men and women in his diocese, by encouraging similar establishments elsewhere, and by providing Africa with examples to be emulated, he fostered the new mode of Christian life. This work was continued by his pupils, especially those who became bishops, and they, in turn, influenced others to follow the example of Hippo. Within the lifetime of Saint Augustine the monastic ideal had penetrated the entire church of Africa, and expressed itself in three forms: the houses of men, communities of women, and consecrated virgins and widows not living the common life. By the year 394 monasteries were to be found in Thagaste, Hippo, and Carthage.⁶ The community at Thagaste had been founded by Augustine in 388, that at Hippo by him in 391, and that at Carthage in 392 under the direction, or at least with the aid of Bishop Aurelius, who had already begun to come under Augustine's influence.⁷ Other foundations followed, including the episcopal houses at Milevis, Uzala, Melonita, Sicca, and Calama in Numidia, and in the province of Byzacenum at Hadrumetum.⁸ Nunneries were established at Hippo, Thagaste, Uzala, and probably elsewhere.⁹ The monastic houses at Thagaste were augmented in 409 when Melania the Younger built and endowed one for men and one for women.¹⁰

Eremites were not favored in Africa, but in addition to the three recognized types of ascetics there were a number of independent, wandering individuals who may or may not have been sincere in their profession of piety. The bishop of Hippo distrusted them, and deplored the mercenary spirit which they often

6 Mentioned in a letter of Paulinus of Nola to Alypius in 394, included in the *Letters of Saint Augustine*. *Ep.* 24.6 (*CSEL*, XXXIV, (1), 77).

7 Augustine returned to Thagaste in July or August 388, and the monastery must have been established almost immediately. The monastery at Hippo was probably founded in the summer of 391, since Augustine asked for a leave of absence until Easter, and, therefore, did not begin his work in Hippo until late in the spring. See Augustine, *Ep.* 21.4 (*CSEL*, XXXIV (1), 52) and Possidius, *Vita Aug.*, XI. In *Ep.* 22.9 (*CSEL*, XXXIV, (1), 62), written in the year 392 Saint Augustine commends Archbishop Aurelius for his gift of land for a monastery which can only be located at Carthage.

8 Augustine, *Ep.* 31.9; 38.3; 149.34; 158.9 and 10; 214; 215; 216 (*CSEL*, XXXIV, (2), 8; 66; XLIV, 380; 494-495; LVII, 380-402; and Possidius, *Vita Aug.*, XI. Possidius, bishop of Calama, undoubtedly includes himself among those pupils of Augustine who founded monastic houses.

9 Augustine, *Ep.* 163; 210; 211 (*CSEL*, XLIV, 520; LVII, 353-371); Possidius, *Vita Aug.*, XXVI.

10 Georges Goyau, *Sainte Mélanie*, 113; quoted by McNabb, "Was the Rule of Saint Augustine Written for Saint Melania the Younger?", *Journal of Theological Studies*, XX, (1919), 245.

showed in taking advantage of the misplaced generosity of pious women.¹¹ They were outside the church, or at least were not approved by the ecclesiastical authorities.¹²

In the *Letters* of Saint Augustine one finds frequent mention of the consecrated virgins and widows, who were numerous and who were apparently known to Africa before Saint Augustine introduced communal life.¹³ By the time when he became priest at Hippo they were already so numerous that the general Council of Africa which convened in that city in 393 deemed it wise to regulate them canonically.¹⁴ It was decreed that no virgin should be consecrated before the age of twenty-five, and then not unless the consecrating priest had procured the permission of his bishop. During the lifetime of their parents these holy women were under their guardianship, and when death removed these natural guardians the bishop assigned in their place "respectable women" who were to live with them and guard them "that they injure not the good repute of the Church by wandering about." Sometimes, no doubt when they had no private income, they were settled on church lands.¹⁵ These consecrated women were held in the highest veneration, and the clergy were ever concerned with guarding their welfare and reputation. It is not surprising that, in addition to the strict guardianship imposed, they were further protected from scandal by the prohibition both of visits from clergymen unauthorized by the bishop and of private interviews. A subdeacon of Spana in the diocese of Hippo was deposed from office for the violation of this canon, and thereupon went over to the Donatists.¹⁶ Unfortunately two of the women involved followed him, and, consorting with the Circumcellions,¹⁷ the three soon won an unsavory reputation. The consecrated women of the noble families were not under the same rigid restrictions and moved about at will, but they usually did not take the vows until they

11 Augustine, *Ep.* 262.5 (*CSEL*, LVII, 625).

12 They continued to afflict the church during the next century, and are condemned by Saint Benedict in his *Rule. Regula Monast.*, I.

13 *Ep.* 35.2; 111.7-9; 188; 208; 212; 263 (*CSEL*, XXXIV, (2), 28-29; 653-657; LVII, 119-130; 342-347; 371-372; 631-634).

14 Council of Hippo, 393, *Statuta Breviata et Collata*, can. 1, 24, 31, and 34 (Mansi, III, 919, 922, 923, 924; Hefele, *Conciliengeschichte*, II, 56, 58, 59.)

15 Augustine, *Ep.* 35.2 (*CSEL*, XXXIV, (2), 28).

16 *Ibid.*

17 The Circumcellions were nomadic bands of Donatist fanatics. See Beaver, "The Donatist Circumcellions," *Church History*, IV (June, 1935), 123-133.

were widows, and if they did so as girls they accompanied their mothers. Thus a certain Galla, "a widow who has taken on herself sacred vows, and her daughter Simplicia, a consecrated virgin, who is subject to her mother by reason of her age, but above her by reason of her holiness," journeyed from place to place in Africa, dispensing to the churches relics of Saint Stephen.¹⁸ The most distinguished virgin who took vows in Africa in the quarter of a century preceding the Vandal conquest was Demetrias, daughter of the consul Anicus Hermogenianus Olybrius and his wife Juliana, a member of the foremost family of the West during the late Roman Empire. In 410 her grandmother Proba and her mother fled with her to Africa to escape the Goths, only to lose much of their wealth to the greedy and brutal Count Heraclian. At Carthage Proba filled her house with holy widows and virgins. A marriage was arranged in 413, but on the eve of the nuptials Demetrias delighted her female guardians by renouncing marriage to dedicate herself to the religious life.¹⁹ Proba and Juliana gave her extensive dowry to the poor. She was consecrated by Archbishop Aurelius, certainly before the canonical age. The news of the event spread rapidly and was everywhere hailed with joy by the advocates of the ascetic and celibate life. The mother and grandmother immediately dispatched letters accompanied by gifts to Saints Jerome and Augustine, but the news was known in Hippo before the letter arrived.²⁰ Saint Jerome responded with his well-known panegyric; Pelagius wrote a letter, against which the bishop of Hippo had to issue a warning; and Augustine sent a letter of extravagant praise, although not as unrestrained as that from Bethlehem.²¹ The latter praised Demetrias for an act which far surpassed in glory all the noble achievements of the men of her illustrious family. All of this adulation apparently led Demetrias to show signs of falling into the sin of pride, for in a later and more temperate letter extolling virginity Augustine reminded her that "this sacred virginal chastity belongs not to her of herself, but is the gift of God." This type of religious

18 Augustine, *Ep.* 212 (*CSEL*, LVII, 371-372).

19 *Ibid.*, 188.1 (*CSEL*, LVII, 120); Jerome describes this conversion in detail in his *Ep.* 130.4-6 (*PL*, XXII, 1108-10).

20 *Ibid.*, 150 (*CSEL*, XLIV, 380-382).

21 Jerome, *Ep.* 130 (*PL*, XXII, 1107-1124); Pelagius, *Ep. ad Demetriadem* (*PL*, XXX, 13-45); Augustine, *Ep.* 150 (*CSEL*, LVII, 380-382). A letter of warning written by Augustine and Alypius, now lost, is mentioned in *Ep.* 188, in which Augustine repeats his admonition (*CSEL*, LVII, 119-130).

dedication continued, but probably was not so frequent after Augustine provided African women with a more purposeful and effective expression of their devotion in ordered, communal life.

With the removal of Saint Augustine from Thagaste to Hippo, the latter place became the fount of monastic life in Africa, and there can be no doubt that the establishments there served as models for those in other dioceses. In addition to the monastery for men founded by Augustine when a priest and with the assistance of Bishop Valerius, another was established in his episcopal house, or perhaps it would be more correct to say that the former was transferred to the bishop's house or that the two together made up one establishment. The bishop speaks of his monastery as one community.²² Two other houses for men were located outside the city.²³ For women there was a house within the city and perhaps another elsewhere in St. Augustine's domain.²⁴ His biographer states that Bishop Augustine left to the church a fully sufficient body of clergy and monasteries of men and women with their continent overseers, together with the library.²⁵ This suggests several foundations for each sex.

A nunnery was governed by a *praeposita*, the mother superior, and associated with her was the *praepositus*, the chaplain and confessor.²⁶ He joined the mother superior in the intimate administration of the monastery only in rare instances, since the regulations concerning intercourse between clerics and nuns were too strict to permit any other arrangement. The mother superior might consult him concerning anything on which she desired advice, particularly when it was a matter beyond her province and power, and presumably this would be whenever the subject had serious spiritual consequences. In extremely important cases of discipline she might also appeal to "the other priests in a body" or to the bishop. Apparently Saint Augustine

22 Augustine, *Serm.* 355.I.2 (*PL*, 1569-1570) and *Ep.* 83.6 and 125.5 (*CSEL*, XXXIV, (2), 392; XLIV, 7).

23 Augustine, *Serm.* 356.10 and 15 (*PL*, XXXIX, 1578, 1580-1581).

24 Augustine, *Ep.* 210, 211, 264 (*CSEL*, LVII, 353-356, 356-371, and 635-638); Possidius, *Vita Aug.*, XXVI. Maxima, who presided over a religious community and who wrote to Augustine complaining about the teaching of false doctrine in her neighborhood, must have lived in the diocese of Hippo, for this was a matter for her own bishop and no other to consider.

25 Possidius, *Vita Aug.*, XXXI.

26 Augustine, *Ep.* 210 and 211 (*CSEL*, LVII, 353ff).

intended that the bishop should be approached only as the last resort.

For many years the mother superior of the nunnery of Hippo was Augustine's sister, who had taken vows following the death of her husband, and when she died her assistant, Felicitas, succeeded her, and the community was thus provided with a prioress trained for the position.²⁷ For many years the house prospered under Felicitas' guidance, but at last harmony was destroyed by dissensions rising out of disciplinary cases. Bishop Augustine, who never visited the nunneries personally unless every other effort had failed,²⁸ addressed to the sisters an exhortation on unity and concord, and dispatched it in the name of both himself and the brethren of his monastery.²⁹ He entreated the nuns to pray for the men in order that they might follow their own advice. After peace was once broken it was not easy to restore it, and other trouble followed in the wake of this case. The new *praepositus*, Rusticus, and the mother superior did not agree, and in this certain of the dissatisfied nuns discovered a cause stronger than their own and one more likely to succeed. Therefore, they took the part of the chaplain and demanded the removal of Mother Felicitas. The bishop's presence was requested, but he refused, since he knew the African temperament thoroughly and realized that nothing could be accomplished while the sisters were in a state of great excitement. Later Saint Augustine sent the nuns a letter intended to settle the affair, but still refused to appear in person.³⁰ This was to be the final word in the case.

Following a general exhortation to have one soul and one heart unto God, the bishop dealt with the specific problem at hand. Rather than ask for the removal of the prioress, the sisters should lament such a possibility. She had been a member of the congregation longer than any of the present sisters. The older sisters had found her ably assisting Augustine's sister when they had first arrived; and the younger had all been received by her and trained under her direction. The majority had taken the veil from her hands. Under her guidance the house

27 *Ibid.*; Possidius, *Vita Aug.*, XXVI.

28 Possidius, *Vita Aug.*, XXVI.

29 Augustine, *Ep.* 210 (CSEL, LVII, 353-356).

30 *Ibid.*, 211 (CSEL, LVII, 356-371). Although this letter is without address or salutation, I assume—and I see no reason to doubt it—that this letter is addressed to the same monastery as *Ep.* 210.

had prospered. Throughout the years no new appointment had been made other than the *praepositus*. If the rebellion was on his account, why did the sisters not ask his removal? If they shrink from that because of the affection and esteem for him, why do they not all the more hesitate to ask the dismissal of their mother superior? Moreover, the duties of the chaplain have been so thwarted by the nuns' disorderliness that he is considering leaving; and he takes no pleasure in the reputation which his overzealous supporters have earned for him. Augustine then makes a plea for peace, and to encourage harmonious life he laid down a number of injunctions to serve the nuns as a general guide of conduct. These form the so-called *Rule of Saint Augustine*.

The *Rule* is by no means a piece of detailed legislation for the ordering of a monastic community. The injunctions are general and suggestive, sometimes explained at length, but never precisely defined. This caused the circumstances of its origin to be forgotten, and, especially after it was adapted at some early date to monasteries of men, tradition held that it had been written originally for Saint Augustine's own monastery. The necessary additions and elucidations were provided by material in the bishop's other writings, especially *De opere monachorum* and *De sancta virginitate*.³¹ The former work supplied what is lacking here on the subject of labor. After the lapse of several centuries the *Rule* came to play an important part in the life of the Western Church. Miss Speakman summarizes its influence thus:³²

From the eleventh century onwards, Augustine's 'Rule' became the standard of every religious community which had a mission beyond the praise of God and the discipline of self. The canon regular and the preaching friar preached and taught, the knight of the military orders fought for religion abroad, the hospital brother and sister labored for the relief of the sick, poor, and leprous at home, while all professedly conforming in life and spirit to the precepts of their holy father Augustine. From the days of the Hildebrandine revival to the period of the Renaissance and the Reformation almost all ordered religious life which was not Benedictine was Augustinian in character, and the tradition was further emphasized in a great post-medieval movement, the active monasticism of the Counter-Reformation. The Austin Rule came almost to mark off the active from the contemplative orders.

31 *CSEL*, XLI, 235-302 and 532-596.

32 Speakman, "The Rule of Saint Augustine," *Historical Essays*, Owens College (Manchester, 1907), 57-75.

The original *Rule* as given in Augustine's letter is the first monastic legislation in the West, but its purpose was limited to quelling the disturbance in this one nunnery, as is most clearly shown by the almost elementary injunctions. When reading it one must keep in mind the fact that communal religious life was only in its incipient stage in Africa.

The first injunction is naturally an admonition to dwell together as single-minded sisters and to have one mind and one heart towards God. At the end of the next paragraph the charge is repeated. Between those two passages we find exhortations dealing with the sin of pride, which lay behind the present troubles.

And call not anything your own, but let everything be common property; . . . Let those of you who had any possession in the world before you entered the monastery willingly consent that they become common property; let those, on the other hand, who had none not seek in the monastery for things they could not have outside it, but let what is needful be conceded to their weakness, even if their poverty, while they were outside, was such that they could not procure even the bare necessities of life.

And let them not go about with head erect because they are associating with those whom they did not dare to approach outside, but let them lift up their hearts and not seek earthly goods, in case the monasteries become of service to the rich and not to the poor, while in them the rich are bowed down with humility and the poor in them puffed up with vanity. But again, let not those who in the world considered themselves something, hold in scorn their sisters who have come to that holy fellowship from poverty; let them endeavor to take greater pride in the fellowship of their poor sisters than in the rank of their wealthy parents.³³

Moreover, those who have contributed from their resources to the funds of the monastery are not to be vain because they are sharing their wealth; for every other kind of iniquity prompts the doing of evil deeds, but pride lurks even in good deeds to their undoing. There is no merit in renouncing wealth if the wretched soul is made prouder by that renunciation. It was, then, pride of class and wealth which had been at the root of the first dissensions.

The friction which arose among the hot-tempered Africans is readily understood. The greater number of monks and nuns were of the lower classes, either freedmen or slaves emancipated at the time of their entrance into the monastery. The church

³³ Augustine, *Ep. 211.5 and 6 (CSEL, LVII, 360-361)*; Baxter, *St. Aug. Sel. Letters*, 381-383.

did not condemn slavery, which was then one of the most important forms of property, but did require that anyone taking orders must first emancipate his slaves.³⁴ Occasionally a master and his slaves entered a monastery together. The eighty monks and one hundred thirty nuns of the two houses which Melania established at Thagaste in 409 were drawn from her enfranchised slaves.³⁵ The above quotation and a passage in *De opere monachorum*³⁶ prove that the situation at Hippo was similar to that elsewhere. In the latter passage Saint Augustine states that the most of those who enter into the servitude of God issue from human bondage, and are men and women accustomed to bodily labor. However, many of them have merited by their virtues to serve as models for others, and it is, therefore, good to admit all of them into the monasteries without inquiring too strictly concerning the motives which impel them, whether they wish to serve God or desire to flee from poverty and toil to comfortable maintenance without work in a community where they will be honored by those who formerly ignored or despised them. The monastic houses thus became, in a measure, charitable institutions in which the church took care of many of the lower orders. The larger number of nuns in the convent at Hippo would, then, be freed-women more or less recently emancipated. The various free classes would be represented, and at the top of the social scale would be at least a few representatives of the provincial aristocracy and perhaps even daughters of great Roman families. If what the saintly bishop says was sometimes true, that the monastic profession was used as a means of climbing the social ladder, it is not surprising that friction occasionally resulted, and in this instance led to disciplinary measures.

The other source of trouble was property. Certain nuns retained their possessions; certain others renounced their wealth; and unfortunately, some of those who did this boasted of their act until they incurred the ill will of the vast majority of sisters who had no possessions to renounce. And again some of those sisters who came out of poverty still resented that fact and believed it to be unjust that in a monastery there should still be distinction according to wealth. Saint Augustine recognized the

34 Leclercq, *L'Afrique chrétienne*, II, 59; Leclercq, article on "Affranchissement," in *Dict. d'arch. chrétienne et de liturgie*, I, 544; see Augustine, *Serm. 356.3 (PL, XXXIX, 1575-6).*

35 Goyau, Georges, *Sainte Melania*, 113; see note 10.

36 *De Opere Monachorum*, 25 (XXII) (CSEL, XLI, 570).

danger of an unequal distribution of wealth among the members of a religious house, and from the beginning he made it a cardinal rule in his own monastery that everything should be held in community. He himself had set the example at Thagaste, and had required that each monk admitted to his society do likewise.³⁷ In the new monastery at Hippo he made poverty the principal rule.³⁸ However, this practice was not universal, and was not altogether practiced at Thagaste after Augustine's removal. A monk of Thagaste became priest of a church in the diocese of Hippo. When he died his congregation and his former monastery quarrelled as to which was to have his property. Augustine was greatly disturbed by the strife, since he feared that the church might be accused of avarice. Bishop Alypius of Thagaste, who had been a member of that first monastic society, and he agreed that it was essential in the future that no one be admitted "to the society of the brethren" before he rid himself of all temporal encumbrances, threw off his life of ease, and gave away his property.³⁹ One would suppose that poverty had always been required in the nunnery at Hippo, but, if it had, the spirit of the law had been evaded. Both causes of this dissension were thus unworthy, and the disaffected were no doubt glad to find a stronger cause in their championing of the priest-superior.

The *Rule* then proceeds to give directions for the ordering of the communal life.⁴⁰ The bishop commands diligence in prayer at the appointed hours and seasons, and the disciplining of the flesh by fasts and abstinence "as far as the health allows." There are no directions concerning liturgical usage, excepting that the sisters are not to sing anything not intended to be sung. Due allowance is to be made for the weak and sick in respect to food, clothing, and bedding. There must be no envy of their privilege, rather pity for their infirmity. It is better to want less than receive more. When the sick return again to health, let them enter cheerfully upon their "more fortunate mode of life." Nothing demonstrates the primitive state of African conventional life more than the next admonition: nuns must aspire to please not by dress but by conduct, and, therefore, let their

³⁷ Possidius, *Vita Aug.*, V. Saint Augustine retained a small amount of property until he became priest at Hippo, and then gave it to the Church of Thagaste. *Ep.* 126.7.

³⁸ *Ibid.*; Augustine, *Serm.* 355.2 (*PL*, XXXIX, 1570).

³⁹ Augustine, *Ep.* 83 (*CSEL*, XXXIV, (2), 388-392).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 211.7-16 (*CSEL*, LVII, 361-369).

appearance be inconspicuous and hair completely covered. In all movements, and especially in the use of the eyes, care must be taken not to attract the desire of any man. The chastity of the mind is to be maintained as well as that of the body. If one of the nuns perceives frowardness of eye in a sister she must admonish her at once; if it is repeated she must bring it to the attention of two or three others, and together they must report the offense to the mother superior in order that the erring sister may be punished with becoming severity. The punishment is to be at the discretion of the superior or of the priest, who may be consulted since this matter concerns the spiritual state of the offender. If the sister refuses to accept her punishment, she may depart of her own accord or be expelled. This extreme step is not to be taken out of cruelty, but out of compassion as a precaution against the destruction of many others through deadly contamination.

The keeping of a common wardrobe is enjoined, as is the washing of garments by the nuns or by laundresses at the discretion of the mother superior. Excessive solicitude for clean raiment can only infect the soul with inward vileness. Baths should be taken once a month unless ill-health requires more frequent ablutions. The public baths were apparently used by the nuns, since it is required that not less than three sisters visit the baths together. For the sake of efficiency and order, the care of the sick and the management of the storeroom, wardrobe, and library should be assigned to particular sisters, and manuscripts should be given out only at fixed hours. All quarrels are to be speedily ended, and forgiveness cheerfully granted. Let the sisters love each other spiritually, not carnally. Obedience is to be given those in authority, especially to the superior as to a mother, so that God be not offended through an offense to her. Even more so must the priest be honored, and this, of course, because his holy order is above the rank of any lay sister. The mother superior may refer to him any matter beyond her power. She must guard against being puffed up by a sense of importance; for she is "fortunate, not in having authority to rule, but in having the love to serve." Towards everyone let her show herself a pattern of good works. "Let her be cheerful in maintaining discipline and fearful to impose it; and although both are necessary, yet let her endeavor to be more loved by you than feared, always bearing in mind that she has to render an

account of you to God. Wherefore, by yielding her greater obedience, have compassion on her as well as on yourselves, because the higher her position is among you the greater is the risk she runs." The final exhortation is to keep these rules with love; and, in order that the sisters might examine themselves "in this treatise as in a mirror," the letter is to be read once a week.

The communities of men in the diocese of Hippo Regius must have been ordered according to certain rules but probably not a detailed code. It is not too much to assume that the monks followed the same general principles which were laid down for the nuns. The *Letters* mention the monastery frequently but give very little information concerning it. Possidius is more informative. Soon after Saint Augustine had been ordained priest, he established a monastery within the church and began to live with the servants of God "according to the manner and rule instituted by the holy Apostles." The principal rule of this society, the bishop of Calama tells us, was that all property should be held in common.⁴¹ Personal possessions were the dangerous avenue by which so many worldly cares and sins might invade the mind and heart and turn them from the service of God. Happily, the bishop of Hippo perceived that the profession of poverty might be carried to an unfortunate extreme. Possidius relates that his garments, footwear, and bedding were modest yet sufficient, and neither too fine nor too coarse:—"for in such things men are wont either to display themselves proudly or else to degrade themselves, in either case seeking not the things which are of Jesus Christ, but their own. But Augustine . . . held a middle course." His table, which he shared with his clergy and monks, was frugal and sparing, the fare usually consisting of vegetables, although meat was often added for the sake of guests and the brethren who needed it. Wine was always served with meals, and the number of cups for each brother was strictly determined beforehand. The table service was of earthenware, marble, or wood, with the exception of the silver spoons. At mealtime the bishop loved conversation and reading better than eating and drinking; and an inscription on the table warned every guest to beware of gossip and refrain from injuring absent persons by unnecessary and harmful

⁴¹ Possidius, *Vita Aug.*, V; Augustine, *Serm.* 355.2 and *Ep.* 83; for life in the monastery see Possidius, *Vita*, XXII ff.

tales.⁴² Even fellow bishops were sternly rebuked for the transgression of this rule. The usual routine was seldom broken when the bishop was in Hippo, and he would never accept an invitation to a feast, "lest by frequent participation in the customs peculiar to feasts his vow of temperance should be broken."⁴³ Saint Augustine had such a high opinion of the binding power and sanctity of oaths that it was ever his concern that they should not be lightly uttered or regarded. He instructed his people through sermons, and his household by word of mouth and precept. To impress it more strongly on the brethren, it was the rule that for each transgression the erring monk lost a cup of wine. However, the use of oaths was such a firmly grounded African practice that the rule was frequently broken; but the bishop allowed no instance to pass unnoticed.

In the bishop's house great stress was laid upon brotherly harmony and mutual forbearance. An offending brother who asks forgiveness is to be forgiven seventy times seven times, just as each one daily asks the Lord to forgive his sins. Yet forbearance has its limits, especially if it is to the injury of the offender. The same principle recommended to the nuns was to be followed here. The erring brother should first be rebuked in secret by the one who noticed his offense; if the warning was not heeded he should try again with one of two others; and if he held these also in contempt, the culprit was to be brought before the church, and failing to obey, he was to be considered as a publican and a heathen. Disciplinary cases of any importance were naturally tried in the episcopal court according to the regular procedure.

No woman was ever permitted to lodge in the bishop's residence, not even Saint Augustine's sister, the *praeposita* of the nunnery of Hippo, nor his nieces who were nuns. It was feared that the presence of their companions, visitors and serving women,⁴³ might be a stumbling-block in the path of weak brethren. If it was quite necessary that a woman be admitted to the house to interview the bishop, she was only allowed to see him in the presence of other clergy, even if the matter were one of secrecy.⁴⁴

⁴² *Quisquis amat dicitis absentum rodere vitam, hac mensa indignam noverit esse suam.*

⁴³ It is interesting to note that nuns employed serving women, at least when visiting away from their nunnery.

⁴⁴ Possidius, *Vita Aug.*, XXVI.

The bishop was abbot of the monastery, and all details of its administration were in his hands, but he was assisted by clerics delegated to attend to certain duties, and they rendered exact account of their stewardship at the end of each year.⁴⁵ Gifts came to the monastery, but apparently its finances were considered only a department of the diocesan treasury, and there was no distinction between monastic and diocesan funds. The revenue of one might be applied to the other.⁴⁶

It is often stated that the monastery of Hippo was a *monasterium clericorum* where the cathedral clergy lived together under rule. Bishop Eusebius of Vercelli (died 371) had first combined the clerical and monastic life, but the plan had not been copied until Saint Augustine introduced it at Hippo. In later ages it became the general practice that choir monks should be in orders, and when the regular canons sought a founder they recognized him in Saint Augustine and were proud to claim the authority of his great name. Ferrère declares that Augustine established only seminaries of priests and students and congregations of laymen, and that monasteries of clerics arose only during the Vandal rule. However, it is clear from the evidence that Saint Augustine made his clergy live as regulars, and that he was both bishop and abbot. However, the monastery in the episcopal house in Hippo was not purely one of clerics; it was mixed. Saint Augustine refers to its members as "our clergy and the brethren settled in our monastery." Sometimes he speaks of monks in orders, sometimes of lay brethren, who may be seeking ordination.⁴⁷ The *professio monachi* is distinct from the *ecclesiasticum ministerium*.⁴⁸ Moreover, the bishop believed that the vocation of monk and priest varied widely, and that, as a rule, a monk should be ordained only after the greatest consideration.⁴⁹ The servile and rustic origin of the majority of monks makes it impossible that they should all have been automatically advanced to orders, even to that of reader. Moreover there was often doubt concerning the purity of the intentions of

45 Leclercq, *L'Afrique chrétienne*, II, 27.

46 Augustine, *Ep.* 83.6 (*CSEL*, XXXIV, (2), 391-392). Augustine states that he will have money to give to a parish church in his diocese only when a large sum again falls to his monastery.

47 *Ibid.*, 60; 64.3; 78.2-3, 6, 9; 125.5; and *Serm.* 355.2 (*CSEL*, XXXIV (2), 221-222; 231; 333-336; 339-341; 344-345; *XLIV*, 7; and *PL*, XXXIX, 1570).

48 *Ibid.*, 262.8 (*CSEL*, LVII, 627).

49 *Ibid.*, 60; 64.3 (*CSEL*, XXXIV (2), 221-222; 231).

many who sought admittance to the monastery.⁵⁰ In writing to his clergy and people Saint Augustine once stated:⁵¹

I frankly avow to your charity, before the Lord our God, whom I have taken since the time when I began to serve Him, as a witness upon my soul, that as I have hardly found any men better than those who have done well in monasteries, so I have not found any men worse than monks who have fallen, whence I suppose that to them applies the word written in the Apocalypse, "He that is righteous, let him be still more righteous; and he that is filthy, let him be still more filthy."

An incident which occurred in the year 401 drew from the bishop of Hippo a very definite statement concerning monks and priests. Against the bishop's wishes and advice two monks, a certain Donatus and his brother, deserted the monastery of Hippo, journeyed to Carthage, and sought ordination at the hands of Archbishop Aurelius. They represented themselves as having come with Saint Augustine's permission, and Donatus succeeded in being ordained before the truth was known. The General Council of Africa deliberated on the case, and, to prevent its recurrence, decreed that anyone who deserted a monastery or was expelled from one might not be admitted elsewhere either to clerical orders or to the charge of a monastery.⁵² Aurelius asked Saint Augustine's advice concerning the disposition of the case, but the bishop of Hippo relied on the primate's good judgment to settle it for good of the church. However, for Aurelius' information he stated his position:⁵³

We must not put God's servants in the way of thinking that the worse their behavoir the easier their advancement to better posts. For it would only make backsliding easier for them and lay a quite undeserved slight on the regular clergy, if we selected for clerical service monks who had run away from their monastery, *seeing that our usual practice is to select for adoption to the ranks of the clergy only those of higher merit and character from among the monks who stay on in their monastery.* The common people say that a bad accompanist makes a good singer; do we want these same common people to laugh at us in the same way and say that a bad monk makes a good clergyman? It is a great pity if we encourage monks to such demoralizing pride and think fit to lay so serious a slight on the clergy, to whose ranks we ourselves belong. Sometimes even a good monk hardly makes a good clergyman, if he possesses sufficient self-control and yet has not the necessary education or the finish of a man who has gone through the normal training.

50 *De Operc Monachorum*, 25 (CSEL, XLI, 570).

51 Augustine, *Ep.* 78.9 (CSEL, XXXIV (2), 344-345).

52 *Ibid.*, 64.3 (CSEL, XXXIV (2), 231). This would be a canon of the Council of Carthage of September 13, 401.

53 *Ibid.*, 60.1 (CSEL, XXXIV (2), 221); tr., Baxter, *St. Aug. Sel. Letters*, 121.

From these statements it seems logical to assume that the episcopal house in Hippo sheltered a mixed community composed of the clergy of the city, the lay monks of greatest promise who were destined for holy orders, and a few other lay brothers required for the performance of the necessary manual work for which for others would not have time. The greater number of monks would be in the other monasteries of the diocese, and would be almost all lay brethren with a few clerics to care for their spiritual needs. The situation was probably duplicated in other dioceses, especially in those where Augustine's pupils ruled.

The purpose of Saint Augustine and his fellows in the first monastery at Thagaste was to "consecrate themselves to God, in fastings and prayers and good works, meditating day and night in the law of the Lord,"⁵⁴ and to find in retirement that "complete withdrawal from the turmoil of transitory things. . . . essential before a man can develop that fearlessness in the face of death which is based neither on the desire for empty glory nor on superstitious credulity."⁵⁵ A few months after the establishment of the monastery Nebridius wrote to his friend Augustine, chafing at their separation, and begging him to devise a means by which they might dwell together, since serious illness kept Nebridius from travelling to Thagaste. In reply⁵⁶ Augustine showed that the physical state of both of them as well as the demands of others upon their attention made this impossible, and then turned to a discussion of their present purpose in life. To go through life planning journeys which cannot be undertaken without disturbance and trouble does not become one who is preparing for that last journey called death; and with this alone, Nebridius knows, their true preparation should be concerned. It may be objected that Saint Augustine follows this line of thought only for the benefit of Nebridius, who was now face to face with death, and that he includes himself in order to make the homily less pointed. No doubt this thought was in Augustine's mind, but the remainder of the passage shows that he was thinking of himself and the monastic life also. The discourse continues: God has bestowed on some bishops the gift of awaiting death manfully and even of desiring it eagerly, and of undertaking the toil of "those other journeys" without any

⁵⁴ Possidius, *Vita Aug.*, III.

⁵⁵ Augustine, *Ep. 10.2 (CSEL, XXXIV (1), 23-24).*

⁵⁶ *Ep. 10 (22ff).*

vexation. However, in Augustine's opinion, neither those who have sought such administrative posts through worldly ambition nor those ambitious persons who failed to attain their goal, have been granted the great boon of acquiring amid their clamor and restless activity that familiarity with death, which he, his brethren, and Nebridius are seeking. Yet both classes might have become godly in retirement. "If this be untrue, then I am of all men, I will not say the most foolish, but certainly the most slothful, for I cannot relish and enjoy that real boon, unless I obtain release from work and worry." The fearlessness in the face of death and the assurance of future bliss which come to one in contemplation are the source of that solid joy with which no pleasure from a transitory source can be compared. The calmness of spirit which one attains is the proof of the success of this type of life.

Withdrawal from the cares of the world was again a primary aim of Saint Augustine's new monastery at Hippo.⁵⁷ However, ecclesiastical and parochial duties demanded more and more attention, and after he became bishop Augustine found this ideal impossible of realization in his episcopal monastery and school. Again and again he laments his lack of leisure.⁵⁸ It was not until the last few days of his life that he was again able to devote himself completely to contemplation and to preparation for death. His friend, fellow bishop, and biographer, Possidius, relates⁵⁹ that at his order the shortest penitential Psalms of David were copied in large letters and hung upon the wall of his chamber in order that he might read them. About ten days before his death he requested that no one visit him excepting at the times when the physicians attended him or when food was brought. He, therefore, had all his time free for prayer. Although unsuited to the episcopal house, this ideal of contemplation and preparation for the life of the other world must have remained in force for the communities of lay brothers and sisters in Hippo. Saint Augustine's friend, Count Boniface, at one time desired to resign his army command and enter a holy retreat to follow that life pursued by "God's servants the monks." In the letter which the bishop of Hippo wrote him there is ref-

57 *Ibid.*, 22.1 (*CSEL*, XXXIV, (1), 54-55).

58 *Ibid.*, 31.4; 98.5; 102.1; 118.3; 139.3; 151.13; 169.13; 213.5; 261; and *Serm.* 339.1.

59 Possidius, *Vita Aug.*, XXXI.

erence concerning "the leisure to follow that quiet life. . . . , in the community of the holy, where the soldiers of Christ contend in silence, not with the purpose of taking men's lives, but of conquering principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness, that is, the devil and his angels; for there are the enemies the holy vanquish, enemies they cannot see, and yet they vanquish invisible enemies by overcoming the objects of the senses."⁶⁰ When writing to Abbot Eudoxius and the monks of Capraria, Saint Augustine first of all asked their prayers for him and his brethren, since monks can pray better than those whose activities in the ministry must keep them busy in the world.⁶¹ It is thus apparent that Augustine had added to the earlier and more selfish ideal a social purpose, intercessory prayer for the secular clergy and the people.

As the population of the monasteries increased, Saint Augustine realized that the ideal of total absorption in contemplation and prayer was no longer practical as it had been in Thagaste. There his company had been made up of learned men who had resigned active careers and retired from a world in whose affairs they had been too much engrossed in order to make amends for their sins and to prepare for the coming life. Now, however, too many laborers and enfranchised slaves sought in the monasteries only a life of indolence. When they refused to be of any assistance in the maintenance of their houses, and objected that the life of the cloister should be entirely contemplative and that no manual tasks should be undertaken, Saint Augustine came to recognize the high ethical value of work and developed his doctrine of monastic labor. His *De opere monachorum* sought to correct this unfortunate tendency in the African monasteries. The author rebuked the idlers who "would fain make idleness the patron of piety." In pointing to the example and precept of Saint Paul, who supported himself by his trade, he suggested that if nothing whatever is to call the monks from their prayers, it seems hardly logical to pause for meals.⁶² The bishop also warned the monks of Capraria that the sin of sloth was as deadly as that of pride, and urged them to beware of this snare of the devil.⁶³

⁶⁰ Augustine, *Ep.* 220.12 (*CSEL*, LVII, 44); tr., Baxter, *St. Aug. Sel. Letters*, 435-437).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 48.1 (*CSEL*, XXXIV (2), 137).

⁶² *De Opere Monachorum*, 20 (*CSEL*, XLI, 564); see also the sections following this, and Montgomery, *St. Augustine*, 251-252.

⁶³ Augustine, *Ep.* 48.2 (*CSEL*, XXXIV (2), 138).

The episcopal monastery was not only the common household of the clergy of the city, but also the theological seminary of the diocese of Hippo, and, indeed, almost of the whole church of Africa. When he became bishop, Saint Augustine found the Catholic church of Hippo, like many another in Africa, in very straitened circumstances and lacking clergy.⁶⁴ To be of the greatest value to the church a clergyman had to have, besides spiritual and moral qualities, a certain education and be marked by "that finish of a man who had gone through the normal training."⁶⁵ To be sure, unlearned clerics were not unknown, and included even bishops among their number. Possidius mentions one such prelate, "a man who feared God, indeed, but who had been born and brought up in a small town and was not much educated in the art of reading."⁶⁶ The idea of establishing a school in this monastery to fill the need of the church came quite naturally to Augustine, himself a famous teacher.

Moreover, that "normal training," the cultural value of which the church recognized, was pagan, not Christian, and a man needed supplementary and corrective education in order properly to consecrate his learning to the service of the church. The triumph of Christianity had not in the least affected the educational system so intimately bound with pagan letters, philosophy, and mythology. In spite of the incompleteness of the Romanization, Africa was at that time, after Italy, the province most devoted to Roman culture, literature, and to that educational system found everywhere in Latin lands.⁶⁷ Every village had its elementary school, that of the *literator*, and the *grammatici* were to be found in the more important towns. In Augustine's home province of Numidia the schools of Madaura enjoyed a high reputation, and there he had studied after Thagaste had no more to offer. Sicca and Telepte also had schools of some note. The *rhetor* was found in Carthage, the metropolis, that *altera*

⁶⁴ Possidius describes (*Vita*, VII) the church of Africa at the time of Augustine's ordination at Hippo as having for a long time lain prostrate, seduced, oppressed, and overpowered, while the Donatists were gaining strength. Later (XI) he relates how the church began to "raise her head" after Augustine's seminary began to send out clergy. This would indicate that lack of clergy was one of the chief troubles of the Catholic church.

⁶⁵ Augustine, *Ep.* 60.1 (*CSEL*, XXXIV (2), 221).

⁶⁶ Possidius, *Vita Aug.*, XXVII.

⁶⁷ Laistner, *Thought and Letters in Western Europe, A.D. 500-900*, 17-26; Leclercq, *L'Afrique chretienne*, II, 6-19; Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Roman Empire*, 391 ff.

Roma,⁶⁸ and here the student completed his reputation. Some, indeed, journeyed to Rome for still more advanced study, but so many of these African youths spent their time in carousals and constant attendance at public festivals that the Emperor Valentinian threatened them with deportation. In his *Confessions* Saint Augustine gives an occasional glimpse into African student life. An education was highly prized, and a parent who, like Augustine's father, made sacrifices for that purpose was praised. The pagan character of the higher education was early recognized by the Church Fathers as a great danger. The youths of the middle and aristocratic classes were regularly exposed during their most impressionable years to the most charming aspect of paganism. The boy's imagination was filled and fascinated by the legends and myths of heroes and gods. It is not surprising that the pagan mold into which his thought was turned could not be easily broken in after years. If the Emperor Julian's attempt to exclude Christians from the teaching profession had succeeded, this effect might have been even further strengthened.

Many a Father of the church before Augustine had given attention to this problem with varying results⁶⁹ but the latter was better prepared to attack the problem than any of them. He had taken the usual course of Roman education, and then had gained repute as a teacher of rhetoric in Africa, Rome, and Milan. His conversion, at the time, affected but slightly his attitude towards pagan culture and the current educational system. He was still an ardent devotee of the liberal arts, and before returning to Africa, he planned and began to write an encyclopedia of the same, but soon had to abandon it for other work. After he had become a clergyman and as the years passed his attitude towards literature and education changed considerably. Deliberately turning his back more and more upon the art which he had taught, he increasingly denied himself the use of its precepts and devices, until in the end he descended in his sermons and popular writings, knowingly and intentionally, to the manner of speech of the common people.⁷⁰ By the end of his life he strongly disapproved of his earlier attitude. In the *Retractations*,

⁶⁸ Augustine refers to Rome and Carthage as "the living centers of Latin Literature," *Ep. 118.9* (*CSEL, XXXIV* (2), 674).

⁶⁹ Laistner, *Thought and Letters in Western Europe, A.D. 500-900*, 26 ff.

⁷⁰ Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur*, IV, 446-447.

when speaking of *De ordine*, he says:⁷¹ "Further (I disapprove) of the emphasis I laid on the liberal arts, of which many saints are greatly ignorant, while some who are familiar with them are not saints." Although the great churchman could deny himself a copy of his beloved Cicero's works—there was not a copy of them in Hippo⁷²—he could not, however, lose them from his memory, and his admiration for Cicero was never lost. The fact that he adapted the *Orator* to Christian needs in his *De doctrina Christiana* is conclusive evidence of that. In the *Letters* Saint Augustine quotes twelve works of Cicero and one unidentified passage.⁷³ Virgil is quoted just as often, and there are many citations from the pagan poets, philosophers, and historians. Moreover, a letter of the year 410 shows that the bishop's reputation as a teacher and student of literature and rhetoric had not been forgotten, and his answer reveals his attitude towards philosophy and rhetoric.⁷⁴

This letter to Dioscurus preaches humility, sets forth Christian truth or the way of salvation as the one essential to be learned by men, and neglects the lad's detailed questions concerning Cicero's *De oratore*. The bishop states:

I have passed over without reply all the questions concerning the orator and the books of Cicero's *De oratore*. I would have seemed to myself a contemptible trifler if I had entered on the exposition of these topics. For I might with propriety be questioned on all the other subjects, if anyone desired me to handle and expand them, not in connection with the works of Cicero, but by themselves; but in these questions the subjects are not in harmony with my profession now.⁷⁵

However, Saint Augustine was here exaggerating in order to make a strong impression on Dioscurus. He did throw over much of the orator's stock in trade, but on the other hand, he was willing to make use of his technical training. To him preaching, the most important means of popular Christian education, was an art which deserved careful study. "Who will dare to say," Augustine asks, "that those who attack the truth are to tell their falsehoods briefly, clearly, and plausibly, while the defenders of it are to express the truth in such a way that it is tedious to listen to, hard to understand, and, in fine, not easy

71 *Retract.*, I.3 (CSEL, XXXVI, 19-20); tr., Laistner, *Thought and Letters*, 32.

72 Augustine, *Ep.* 118.9 (CSEL, XXXIV (2), 673).

73 Goldbacher, *S. Aurelii Augustini Hipponiensis Episcopi Epistulae*, Index IV B, *Loci ex aliis scriptoribus*, V, 109-114 (CSEL, LVIII).

74 Augustine, *Ep.* 117 and 118 (CSEL, XXXIV (2), 663-664 and 665-698); Sparrow-Simpson, *Letters of St. Aug.*, 52-55, reviews the letter in detail.

75 *Ep.* 118.34 (CSEL, XXXIV (2), 697-698).

to believe it? That the former while imbuing the minds of their hearers with erroneous opinions, are by their power of speech to awe, to melt, to enliven and arouse them, while the latter shall in defense of the truth be sluggish, frigid, and somnolent? Who is such a fool as to think this wisdom?"⁷⁶

In order to rescue students for the priesthood from the dilemma of either going untrained or acquiring an education only by bowing to paganism, the bishop of Hippo composed his celebrated treatise *De doctrina Christiana*, in which he adapted Cicero's *Orator* to Christian needs and replaced illustrations from the usual pagan sources with those from Christian writers. In Book II and III Augustine admits the need of the liberal arts, although insisting that this study end as early as possible, while in Book IV he endeavors to prove that the Christian preacher has no need of profane literature in his training, since Scripture provides all necessary illustrative material, and no need of rhetorical instruction since eloquence can better be learned by becoming familiar with good models than by studying rules. This discrepancy is due to the fact that a part of Book III and the whole of Book IV were written thirty years after the earlier portion, and he had modified his opinion to that extent. The ideas in this treatise were probably put into practice as far as possible in the seminary at Hippo. In accordance with these views the library at Hippo, which was one of the most important departments of the monastic seminary with branch libraries or deposits in the other communities, was entirely lacking in pagan literature.⁷⁷ Possidius states that it contained the works of Augustine and of "other holy men." Its purpose was not only to collect and preserve books, but also to edit and copy manuscripts.⁷⁸ The library was always one of the bishop's chief cares, and at the end of his life he was very solicitous concerning its future welfare. Fortunately it escaped the partial burning of Hippo by the Vandals, and was in a good state when Possidius wrote his biography of Saint Augustine.

The school fulfilled the object for which it was founded. Not only did the diocese of Hippo enjoy a sufficient number of clergy, but the seminary became noted throughout Africa and "the Church, for the sake of its peace and unity, began to de-

76 *De Doctrina Christiana*, IV.3; Montgomery, *St. Aug.*, 203.

77 Augustine, *Ep.* 118.9; 211.13; 231.7 (*CSEL*, XXXIV (2), 679; LVII, 368; 510); *De Haeresibus*, 80.

78 *Ibid.*, 231.7.

mand with great eagerness bishops and clergy from the monastery. . . . and obtained them." About ten, Possidius says, became bishops.⁷⁹ These men, in turn, established monasteries and schools. Although it was with regret that Saint Augustine sent the brethren to fill distant posts,⁸⁰ the benefit to the church was so great that he came to regard the education of priests as one of the primary purposes of monasteries. To the monks of Capraria he wrote:⁸¹

We exhort you in the Lord, brethren, to be steadfast in your purpose, and persevere to the end; and, if the Church, your Mother, calls you to active service, guard against accepting it, on the one hand, with too eager elation of spirit, or declining it, on the other, under the solicitations of indolence, and obey God with a lowly heart, submitting yourselves in meekness to him who governs you, who will guide the weak in judgment, and will teach them his way. Do not prefer your own ease to the claims of the Church; for if no men were willing to serve her in the bringing forth of her spiritual children, the beginning of your own spiritual life would have been impossible.

The practice of having the parochial clergy live under monastic rules soon produced a celibate clergy in places where that was the custom, but this was not universal and there were many married clergymen. The conduct of their children was a matter of the highest concern to the church, and several canons attempted to guarantee their morality.⁸²

The growth of monastic institutions in Africa under Saint Augustine's influence appears to have been remarkably rapid, but the movement never came to full bloom. Very few of these establishments escaped destruction at the hands of the Arian Vandals.⁸³ However, the support which this great doctor of the church gave to the monastic movement in Africa and the weight of his reputation gave impetus and encouragement to it in other provinces, and certain contributions of Africa to western monachism, especially the institution of the canon regular, were to bear abundant fruit in later ages.

79 Possidius, *Vita Aug.*, XI.

80 Augustine, *Ep.* 84.1 (*CSEL*, XXXIV (2), 392).

81 *Ibid.*, 48.2 (*CSEL*, XXXIV (2), 138).

82 Council of Hippo, 393, *Stat. Brev. Col.*, can. 11, 12, 13 (*Mansi*, III, 921). One finds mention of children of clerics in the letters of Saint Augustine, such as the son of a priest in *Ep.* 158 and the granddaughter of Bishop Severus of Milevis in *Ep.* 111.7.

83 Possidius, *Vita Aug.*, XXVIII.

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BOOK REVIEWS

A HISTORY OF THE EXPANSION OF CHRISTIANITY: THE FIRST FIVE CENTURIES

By KENNETH SCOTT LATOURETTE. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937. 412 pages. \$3.50.

This is the first of what promises to be a six-volume monumental work giving an account of the expansion of Christianity since the days of Paul and his associates. This volume covers the first five centuries; volume II will deal with the years from 500 to 1500; volume III, from 1500 to 1800; and volumes IV, V, and VI will tell the story of modern missions since the days of Carey.

The author seeks the answer given by history to seven questions of vital importance to the student of religion. What was the Christianity which spread? Why did Christianity spread? Why has Christianity suffered reverses and at times met only partial success? By what processes did Christianity spread? What effect has Christianity upon its environment? What has been the effect of the environment upon Christianity? What bearing do the processes by which Christianity spread have upon the effect of Christianity on its environment and of the environment upon Christianity—a question of considerable interest to missionary statesmen today.

The period covered by this first volume has of course been the object of study on the part of specialists for a long time. Latourette does not write as a specialist in this particular field. The later volumes will lead him into the area where he can speak with more authority. But he does bring to this period a breadth of vision and familiarity with subsequent developments which some specialists seem to lack.

He has no new theory to offer or to support. The method of treatment is rather to give a general survey of the events recorded in original documents and of theories and interpretations of the leading scholars, all of which is carefully documented. Data is weighed against data, theory is set over against theory, in an effort to give a balanced judgement as to how we can account for the spread of Christianity while other competing religions disappeared. The result is that while much light is thrown upon the questions propounded, the conclusions are not as categorical as many ardent partisans might desire. The reason is that Latourette is writing as a historian and not as a camouflaged apologist either for the Christian religion or for Christian missions, and consequently is careful not to push his conclusions beyond the point which seems warranted by the data available.

Other scholars have dealt with the expansion of Christianity dur-

ing particular periods or have written brief surveys of the history of missions. Latourette has undertaken to tell the whole story in greater detail. When the task is completed the Christian church will have laid before it for the first time a concise and yet fairly comprehensive picture of geographical expansions and contractions, some of the reasons for the same, the influence of Christianity upon its environment from age to age, and the influence of these diverse environments upon "the original impulse" which came from Christ and the apostles.

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Archibald G. Baker.

THE ROMAN PRIMACY TO A. D. 461

By B. J. KIDD. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936. 159 pages. \$1.75.

Discussions of church unity which get beyond wishful thinking and sentimental hopes inevitably lead to the decisive problem of authority. For this reason Dr. Kidd's little book on the *Roman Primacy* is of timely as well as of permanent value. He remarks in his prefatory note, citing Dom Cuthbert Butler, "I cannot help thinking that the matter of the primacy (of Rome) . . . in reality presents . . . much greater obstacles (than the decree of infallibility) to that united Christendom . . . that is the dream and object of prayers and of striving of countless men of goodwill." Dr. Kidd further makes the incisive comment, "We never got face to face with the question of a primacy of jurisdiction at Malines."

With this in view, Dr. Kidd has written a concise and accurate account of the development of the Roman claims for primacy of jurisdiction from the days of Clement to Leo I. His book does not make easy reading. Like his monumental *History of the Church to A. D. 461*, it is packed with relevant detail and well documented, but its organization is clear and follows chronological lines. A great deal of the material is to be found in his *History* but a number of points pertinent to this enquiry he has here further elaborated.

The main thesis of his book is aptly summarised by him: "As to the nature of the Roman primacy, it was a primacy of leadership: more than a primacy of honour, though less than a primacy of jurisdiction; and the bishop of Rome, as occupant of the first Apostolic See in Christendom, derives from St. Peter and St. Paul, the twin founders, in the sense of organizers, of the church in Rome, that pre-eminence which has been accorded to him everywhere, always and by all, and is still generally recognized as his" (155).

Many points of interest emerge from his study, *e. g.*, that the first appearance of the Petrine text (Matt. 16:18-9) dates from the days of Callistus, and that here the pope claimed, not "any papal authority," but only "the power of forgiving and retaining sins" (22). Significant also is the discussion of the primacy in Leo. Dr. Kidd is at pains to point out that the power of the papacy at Rome was largely the creation

of the state. The Rescript of Valentinian III (445) went far beyond the grant of Gratian, and succeeded in riveting "a papal autocracy on the Western Empire or what remained of it—by the whole force or the civil law" (127). Dr. Kidd cites F. W. Puller, *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome* (196), to the effect that "the papal jurisdiction, outside of the suburbican provinces, mainly arose out of the legislation of the State. Erastianism begat it; and forgery developed it." Such a statement is of peculiar interest when one reflects on the correspondence of Leo with the East, and his defense of the primacy of Rome against Constantinople on the ground that the former is an Apostolic See, while the latter merely enjoys secular privileges (Ep. 104, etc.).

Although Dr. Kidd dwells much upon the political scene, he pays no attention to the economic factors that entered into the development of the papal power—factors that gained great significance by the time of Gregory. His discussion of the debated passage in Irenaeus (3.3.2) is also open to criticism (15). He does not attempt to reconstruct the Greek original and is rather dogmatic in his interpretation. Most scholars may possibly agree with him that the sense of the passage is something like this. "It is thus because the Roman church is Christendom in miniature that truth may best be found there; and hence from the consentient testimony of the various churches, which finds constant witness at Rome, the pre-eminent authority of the Roman church" (15). Nevertheless, it is by no means clear that the Greek behind *convenire ad* means "resort to." The Latin may translate the phrases in the sense of "agree with." Precisely what Irenaeus intended by the phrase translated "*potiorem principalitatem*" Dr. Kidd does not attempt to explain. He contents himself with the paraphrase "pre-eminent authority." Without qualification he takes *in qua* to refer to the Roman church, though there is a possibility that the phrase may have had the meaning "inasmuch as."

These are, however, minor points. Dr. Kidd's main theme is ably and accurately handled and his book is a timely introduction to a provocative subject. It gives the historical basis for the absence of the Roman church from the conferences of Oxford and Edinburgh. While not professing to add anything particularly new to the discussion, his work, measured in its judgment and keen in its scholarship, well fulfills the need for a short historical introduction to the Roman claims.

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Cyril C. Richardson.

CHURCH LEARNING IN THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE, 867-1185

By J. M. HUSSEY. New York: Oxford University Press, 1937. xiv, 259 pages. \$4.25.

This is an excellent study of the subject of scholarship and religion during the period of the Macedonian and the Comnenian dynasties. The author uses predominantly the original sources, but also makes

use of the standard secondary works. Of particular interest to the student of church history are the chapters dealing with the Ecclesiastical Organization, the Patriarchs, and two chapters on Byzantine monasticism, and especially on the much neglected, although really quite important eleventh-century mystic, Symeon the Young. This is not meant to imply that the whole work is not of direct interest to the student of religion in general, and of the Christian church in particular. The author displays a sure grasp of the subject in all its ramifications, but naturally stresses the cultural aspects of it. Because of this emphasis on the scholastic and religious phases, the work is a particularly valuable contribution to the literature dealing with Byzantine history which hitherto has dealt predominantly with the political aspect.

In fact, one might make the remark concerning the book which is often made regarding good sermons, that like the latter, it is disappointing in its brevity. One would like more extended presentation of some phases of the subject. Thus, for instance, the account of such a dominating personality and outstanding scholar as Patriarch Photius I is all too brief. Though much more is said about Michael I Cerularius, an improvement as far as exhaustiveness is possible even here. The reader would particularly desire to know more of the contents of Michael Psellus' *Accusations* against Cerularius. But what is given is good.

A few minor errors have crept in, but they are not worth mentioning.

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Matthew Spinka.

ENGLISH MONKS AND THE SUPPRESSION OF THE MONASTERIES

By GEOFFREY BASKERVILLE. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937. 312 pages. \$3.00.

This is a frank rebuttal of what the author calls the lachrymose school of writing about the dissolution of the monasteries. There is, he feels, little reason for sentimental admiration of monasticism on the eve of the dissolution, or for tears at its disappearance. Indeed there was a movement toward suppression on the part of the church authorities themselves during the whole of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Monastic zeal was on the wane, numbers had dwindled, almsgiving was frequently neglected, finances and property were often mismanaged, hospitality had become the remunerative business of inn-keeping, monastic schools were taught by hired schoolmasters, not by monks, few of whom were well enough educated to teach in them. Not even may it be said that as landlords the monasteries were more kindly than the laity.

Further, the characters of Henry VIII's commissioners were not by any means as black as they have been painted, and their methods—the questions they asked, their ways of securing evidence, the content of their injunctions, and the nature of their reports, even the oft noted

haste of their visitations, were all in strict line with precedent previously set by episcopal visitors.

Finally, in place of "the legend of persecuted and starving monks," we find, after the dissolution, abbots as bishops and deans, monks and friars as prebendaries, minor canons, rectors, vicars, and curates; many of them receiving pensions from the state in addition to the emoluments of their cures, so that they were better off than their brethren of the secular clergy who had never been monastics.

All this and more is set forth clearly, entertainingly, not at too great length, and on the whole with ample documentation. One sometimes wishes however, for a bit more evidence for the author's generalizations, and one is occasionally given pause when, after the story of what happened to this or that monk, or to a dozen monks, the conclusion is reached that the same was the fate of all. More specific evidence for some of the author's deductions will doubtless be asked and, we hope, sought for, but at any rate the book is challenging, and by no means to be left unread by anyone at all interested in English church history, Tudor secular history, or the general history of monasticism.

The Episcopal Theological School,
Cambridge, Massachusetts.

J. A. Muller.

CALVIN AND THE REFORMATION

By JAMES MACKINNON. London and New York: Longman's, 1936.
302 pages. \$6.40.

Dr. Mackinnon, now Professor Emeritus of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Edinburgh, has followed his extensive work on Martin Luther with a biography of John Calvin, published in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the publication of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. The method which he applies to this most recent literary effort of his is largely the same which he used in his work on Luther. Depending upon the original sources in conjunction with standard biographies and monographers, he describes the biographical development of his "hero." In contrast to the Luther volumes it must be noted, however, that this study of Calvin is based neither on an exhaustive analysis of the sources nor on a complete and consistent use of secondary literature.

Although he has made an effort to put Calvin into a general historical surrounding, it can hardly be said that he has accomplished an historical biography in the fullest sense of the term. The introduction, which is devoted to Zwingli, does not fully serve the purpose of putting the Genevan reformer into his setting. Nor is the analysis of Calvin's literary and practical work of such a sort that it is properly and fully related to the theological, ecclesiastical and cultural tendencies of his own era. Moreover, the estimate of his influence upon the future is very sketchy, and the characterization of Calvin as well as the evaluation of his accomplishments reflects Dr. Mackinnon's bias against Calvin's intolerance, as if he

could be blamed for his lack of eighteenth and nineteenth century liberalistic attitudes.

I do not want to give the impression of underestimating the reliability and scholarliness of this most recent Calvin biography, but I must assert my opinion that it does not contribute anything essential to current Calvin research. As a matter of fact, some of the most recent investigations on Calvin's background and on his theological and political ideas seem to have been overlooked. A competent and fully up-to-date estimate of Calvin written in the English language is therefore still waiting. A critical reader will observe with particular regret that Professor Mackinnon's chapters on Calvin's theology are but a *résumé* of the *Institutes* and in no way a critical historical description and interpretation of the general character and the specific content of Calvin's system.

The book will be useful in connection with general courses on the history of the reformation or of Calvin. However, it is my judgment that in spite of its age, Williston Walker's biography has not been outrivaled by this most recent newcomer on the scene of English Calvin studies.

The Chicago Theological Seminary.

Wilhelm Pauck.

THE ENGLISH BISHOPS AND THE REFORMATION, 1530-1560

By C. G. MORTIMER AND S. C. BARBER. London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1936. vi, 144 pages. 8s.6d.

It is a great pity that this short work, which bears the mark of very considerable and patient study, should be so badly disfigured by the marks of propaganda. It would seem that the *nihil obstat* of the censor will have to be transferred by the reviewer to the Protestant reader.

The work is not only a painstaking analysis of the succession in England, during the critical years of the Reformation, but it also contains a table of descent of the Roman succession down to 1935. The book falls into two parts. Part I is mainly introductory, and an analysis of the four reigns from a rigid ultramontane canonical point of view, as appears in the definition of the requirements of a valid episcopate:

"Two things a bishop must possess—consecration and jurisdiction. His valid consecration was secured under the old Pontifical, the customary form of the Church. His spiritual jurisdiction was given, not by the King, but by the Pope. His temporalities were granted by the State, but his right to feed and govern the flock of Christ was derived from the one source of spiritual jurisdiction in the Church, namely, the Holy See." (p. 7).

On the basis of this axiom, the authors review the Reformation under Henry VIII and Edward VI (cc.II-III), the Marian reaction and the Elizabethan settlement (cc.IV-V). It is pointed out that Queen Elizabeth was crowned by Bishop Oglethorpe of Carlisle (p. 45), the archbishop of York (Heath) having declined to participate, and several quotations—of vows, of speeches in the House of Lords—follow (pp. 46-50), in which the attitude of the hierarchy at the opening of the reign is clearly

and succinctly set forth. The conclusion of this section is based on the views of Tunstall, bishop of Durham.

Part II is concerned with Apostolic succession, and consists in the main of lists and statistics. A short bibliography, from which A. W. Had-dan's *Apostolic Succession in the Church of England* is conspicuous by its absence, concludes the essay.

As a short compendium of the ultramontane view of the Anglican Reformation, this book is useful. It has, in addition, the distinct merit of dividing the sheep from the goats in the episcopate, and of giving, thereby, a much clearer view of the forces ranged against the crown than can usually be found in Protestant works. The information on the later developments of Roman Catholicism in England is not easily accessible elsewhere and the summary (pp. 104-129) can be commended, although the parallel of the Roman church with "the scrap of paper" and "the plight of Belgium" in 1914 is hardly fortunate, as the military of that country point to the ecclesiastics' share in thwarting adequate armament in the opening years of the century!

The Graduate School of Theology, Oberlin College.

F. W. Buckler.

THE PURITAN PRONAOS

By SAMUEL ELIOT MORISON. New York: New York University Press, 1936. 281 pages. \$3.75.

In the process of giving Harvard what is probably the most elaborate and graphic history any university in the world can boast, Professor Morison has made himself a leading authority on Puritanism in New England. In the nine chapters of this volume, which were given as lectures at New York University on the Stokes Foundation in 1934, it is noteworthy that, as befits a scholar, chief attention is paid to Education in New England (college, elementary, grammar schools); then to Literature (historical, political, poetic, as well as booksellers, libraries and printing presses); then to Religion (doctrinal and homiletical); finally to Learning in general (scientific strivings—and witchcraft!).

It would be very, very difficult more usefully and interestingly to compress into nine lectures such an amount of the latest researches on New England Puritanism. Nor are they simply description and interpretation. The author takes occasion, while graciously sharing with his hearers the pleasures of his favorite trees and flowers in the field they are traversing, to correct statements and estimates of others which he deems false and unfair, so that the book is an authoritative answer to the anti-Puritan barrage of the past two decades which anti-Prohibitionist, Socialists, nudists and Neo-Catholics have laid down. For instance he argues that economic betterment was not the prime motive of the founders of the colony, but religious idealism, and refutes the charge that the public school system (his survey of the creating legislation and its effects is the best I know) was parson-ridden. He shows that the Puritan ministers, unlike many in the century after Galileo's condemnation,

were not obscurantist toward the "new astronomy," and quotes a typical sentence from a letter of the Rev. John Davenport of New Haven anent a Harvardian's advocacy of Copernicus. "Let him enjoy his opinion and I will rest on what I have learned till more cogent arguments be produced" (240).

Dr. Morison reviews the latest studies of the witchcraft delusion to demonstrate his claim that the Puritan ministers were not foremost, nor even active in starting or prolonging it, but rather took the initiative to check it by disparaging "spectral evidence." Frequently he takes the offensive and brings out some amazing truths, to wit, New England's superiority in intellectual energy and fertility over the other English and French colonies; Boston's claim to second place as a publishing center of the English world *ca.* 1690-1700; the generosity of the Puritans in giving us holidays rather than denying us their joys—Thanksgiving Day for Christmas, Election and Commencement Day for May Day; the Puritan's fondness for secular music and art (save drama), however austere his church service; Puritan approval of the fullest enjoyment of connubial delights, though extramarital incontinence was strictly condemned; the almost total absence of sermonic stress on predestination in the strict Calvinist sense, but the preaching of salvation open to all penitent souls, according to the Covenant or Federal theology. The author's obvious interest in theology again incurs our gratitude when it leads him to point out the traces of the religion of nature in Anne Bradstreet's beautiful poem "Contemplations," while his analysis of Gershom Bulkeley's remarkable "Will and Doom" reveals High Tory Jacobitism in Connecticut of 1692.

Throughout the book there is ample evidence of the writer's recognition of the "historicity of the contemporaneous," to use Samuel M. Crothers' phrase; but especially pertinent in his condemnation of the silence of the "best people" during the witchcraft furore, who "knew perfectly well that the Court was condemning innocent people (yet) held their tongues lest they bring the judges and the government into contempt . . . how it recalls the actions of wise and good people in the same Commonwealth in a similar miscarriage of justice there I need not name!" (253). Is the reviewer mistaken in supposing this to be a reference to the Sacco-Vanzetti "witchcraft delusion" in which, as in 1691, a president of Dr. Morison's own university was deeply involved?

The Meadville Theological School.

Charles Lyttle.

A PURITAN OUTPOST

A HISTORY OF THE TOWN AND PEOPLE OF NORTHFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

By HERBERT COLLINS PARSONS. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937. xiii, 546 pages. \$5.00.

This history was written at the request of a Northfield town meeting, which chose well its historiographer. A parallel to it can hardly be cited for vivid particular recording of the past. Mr. Parsons has lived in imagination in every period of his town's history. His imagination, however, is

inspired and controlled by facts. He has microscopic knowledge of the whole field. His book has neither bibliography nor footnotes (though blessed with a good index), but obviously he has searched records, of town, county and state, has studied genealogies exhaustively and has possessed himself of a vast fund of local memories. He knows who lived in every one of the older houses from its building and how the houses have been altered and how the streets looked at different times and where people came from and went and who married whom and who their children were and what clothes the people wore and how they pronounced their words and what they got for their crops and labor and so on—whatever you like to ask about.

This sounds as though the book might be a chronicle of small beer, which it is not. One thing averting this is the succession of pictures of personalities, incarnations of the New England spirit. Another is the constant relation of the history of one town to the history of colony and state and nation. The changes in the population of Northfield in 1830-60 appear as illustrating the industrial revolution in New England and the early immigration, of Irishmen brought in by the building of the first railroad. The story of the schools in the nineteenth century exemplifies the effect on education in Massachusetts of Horace Mann. A frontier town, an "outpost," not established until 1672, Northfield is not completely typical of Massachusetts. Yet the panorama of American history from Indian warfare to the depression of 1929 is seen reflected in its houses and streets. Mr. Parsons' book is therefore a mine for the social historian.

Northfield's comparative remoteness during a long period gave its history a peculiar significance in relation to the Puritan character, for it long retained its native population. "At the end of its second century . . . the decided majority of its people were descendants of original settlers." Religiously the town had of old "a tradition of liberalism." Its only relation to the Great Awakening was that it upheld its minister, attacked for Arminian teaching in dissent from Edwards. Late in the eighteenth century the dominant influences changed from Connecticut and Yale to Boston and Harvard. The Unitarian controversy was felt in that the parish church became Unitarian and the Second Congregational Society, orthodox, was formed in 1825.

The latter part of the book is of course dominated by the effects on Northfield of Moody's residence and schools and conferences. A son of Northfield, he revolutionized the town. As a townsman he appears in an unaccustomed light and loses no stature. Thirty pages of biographies add to the book's value.

Auburn Theological Seminary.

Robert Hastings Nichols.

PRESBYTERIANS IN COLONIAL PENNSYLVANIA

By GUY SOULLIARD KLETT. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1937. xi, 297 pages. \$3.00.

This is a new approach to the history of the Presbyterian church, which Mr. Klett does not conceive of as existing in a vacuum, but in-

timately related to the life of the people. His endeavor has been to "portray along with the activities of Presbyterian ministers the responsiveness of Presbyterian congregations in the extension of religious influences within the province of Pennsylvania." A glance at some of the chapter headings will make this purpose clear: "The Formation of Local Religious Societies," "The Activities of Local Congregations," "Education among Presbyterians," "Presbyterians in Political Affairs." Neither is this work of merely local interest, as Philadelphia was the headquarters of Presbyterianism throughout the colonial period.

Mr. Klett, who is special research worker in the Department of History of the Presbyterian Church, is a painstaking student who is thoroughly familiar with the source material, and has produced a book which the serious student of American church history cannot afford to be without. It is fully documented, has an adequate bibliography and index, and is illustrated with six river and stream maps which are of the greatest service, when it is realized that the earliest settlements were upon the waterways and that these frequently gave their names to the local congregations. This is not only a work of real importance to the student, but has the additional attraction that it is written in a style that will prove a delight to the casual reader.

Philadelphia, Pa.

Thomas C. Pears, Jr.

BISHOP BUTLER AND THE AGE OF REASON

By ERNEST CAMPBELL MOSSNER. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936. xv, 271 pages. \$2.50.

This publication of 1936, not by a church historian or theologian but by an instructor in English literature, finds its *raison d'être* in the fact that in 1736 Joseph Butler, Clerk of the Closet to the second of England's great queens, Caroline of Anspach, published the *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*. For two hundred years Anglican theology has produced nothing more consequential than the *Analogy*, as Dr. Mossner's methodical survey of that field (as well as of Deism, and the Newtonian philosophy of religion) amply demonstrates. The chief value of the book (and it is very considerable) consists in its compendious review of the current of religious thought and controversy through two hundred and fifty years, the *Analogy* serving as the point of reference. For Bishop Butler and his work it will probably remain for a long time the best work. For the reviewer, its claim to originality lies in the adroit manner in which the author has interwoven his rich knowledge of secular literature and art as running comment and interpretation. The gain in realism and interest is very great.

In his presentation and analysis of Bishop Butler's apologetic and ethics, Dr. Mossner shows surprising aptitude, for a secular student, and rightly prefers, for mental power and cogency, the *Rolls Sermons* (1726) to the *Analogy*. Had he extended his study of both to the American field

(especially Channing and early New England Liberalism) as well as to the German Neologists (J. J. Spalding translated the *Analogy* in 1756 and Butler's popularity is indicated in A. F. W. Sack's *Selbstbiographie*), he would have found further corroboration of his subject's wide influence.

Like speculative Freemasonry, Butler's works were endeavors to defend religion in general and Christian doctrine and ethics in particular from the attacks of infidels and cynics. Yet, from 1725 to 1750, approximately, the former probably did far more than all the theologians of the period to dissuade the Whig aristocracy from, at least, overt irreligion, and to persuade them to, at least, a pragmatic appreciation of Christianity. For the laymen, high and low, who were disaffected with the church, not only because of High Tory Jacobitism among the clergy, but because of flagrant preferment hunting (of which Bishop Butler was far from innocent), club discussion and lodge idealism superseded church attendance. Butler's argument for the plausibilities and probabilities of what was virtually Deistic Christianity had little success in retrieving what seemed even to him a "falling church." But when the spirit of the age changed, when Walpole peace policies gave place to the elder Pitt's war policies, when *post-bellum* neurasthenia, Evangelicism, Wesleyanism and Romanticism restored fervor and vitality to British religion, the preachers and teachers had the *Analogy* to provide them with pulpit logic, with which to secure their returning congregations. Since then its sincere, thoughtful yet quite fallacious "It seems very likely . . ." has been a tremendous help.

Of the decline, reaction and revival, even unto Gladstone and Huxley, this book offers a well-proportioned survey, a plenitude of recondite periodical, pamphlet, and diary information and a capital bibliography. Who will now furnish us with an equally fine study of British Deism, irreligion and its opponents, from Lord Herbert through Blount to John Toland?

The Meadville Theological School.

Charles Lytle.

CONNOP THIRLWALL, HISTORIAN AND THEOLOGIAN

By JOHN CONNOP THIRLWALL, JR. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936. viii, 271 pages. \$4.00.

The writer of this life of Bishop Thirlwall is to be congratulated on having produced one of the most satisfying and well balanced pieces of biography that has appeared for some time. None of those elements of "family pride" which so frequently mar a kinsman's work disfigure this work. It was long overdue that some other aspect than Tractarian redemption of the nineteenth century, together with its monopolistic claims, should find some place in its historiography. The Evangelical tradition has to some extent held its own, but the Central and Broad Church Party has suffered from a bilateral attack, of which Thirlwall is alike the victim and hero.

Born in 1797, he was eighteen years old in 1815 when the Peace of Vienna brought to a close the Napoleonic wars, and entered Cambridge that year. On July 28, 1875, sixty years later, he died. He had lived through a period of revolution in dynasties, empires and thought in church and state, and his life forms a link between the church of the eighteenth century and the age of Lightfoot, Westcott and Hort, of Disraeli and Gladstone, and the opening of the present century. He lived through the Reform Act of 1832, the opening years of the Oxford Movement; he introduced to England the fruits of the rising German historiography. He saw the revival of Convocation and the appearance of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Almost alone he championed Colenso and protected the rising Biblical and theological scholarship of the new order from the consequences of the *odium theologicum* and ignorance of the prevailing order of the day.

One thing, however may be singled out for notice, as it strikes a note which is both opportune and timely—his treatment of the relations of church and state. He was no Erastian, but he firmly maintained the right of the queen's courts, and particularly of the High Court of Parliament to their share in ecclesiastical legislation and the final adjudication of church suits. In these days, when the campaign against the Establishment, its responsibilities and constitutional limitations is the high road of clerical advertisement to ecclesiastical preferment, mainly under Oxonian leadership, it is refreshing to read the origins of the saner Cambridge view. The Cambridge School stood firm by the Establishment. Its men "had greater faith in the Christianity of the House of Commons than in the Christianity of the Upper Houses of Convocation," and in the second half of this book, the author's development of this aspect of Thirlwall's work is of outstanding and permanent value.

Thirlwall was shy, often frigid and even repellent to his clergy, but that was not the whole of his character. His correspondence with Miss Elizabeth Johnes shows his human side—the response of a lonely soul to companionship. The writer has used this correspondence to develop and annotate the later years of the bishop's life. This review cannot conclude better than by quoting the author's judgment in the closing paragraph:

"Thirlwall's importance to his own age—his contribution to the Victorian Compromise—is exceedingly interesting to a modern student of the history of thought. Basically sceptical and, in another sense, basically religious, he made an honest compromise between faith, as represented by the formularies of the Book of Common Prayer and the body of traditional Christian doctrine, and reason, as represented by the new scientific knowledge. Such a compromise (the popular interpretation of the Broad Church position) could satisfy as little a complete rationalist as it could satisfy a fervently pious Christian. Yet it worked. The Victorian age desperately needed a working compromise between ways of thought and feeling which seemed to be antipodal. Thirlwall's career as scholar and bishop proved that it worked. There is his true significance."

The Graduate School of Theology, Oberlin College.

F. W. Buckler.

LEGACY OF A CHRISTIAN MIND: JOHN M'LEOD CAMPBELL

By EUGENE GARRETT BEWKES. Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1937.
305 pages. \$2.00.

John M'Leod Campbell holds a secure but minor place in the history of theology. He is one of those theological celebrities whom one knows of but does not necessarily know. Professor Bewkes knows him intimately, holds him in high appreciation, and provides us in this book with a detailed interpretation of his thought and influence. Such a study is long overdue. Many writers have used Campbell's ideas without being careful to credit them to him, and misstatements about his relations to contemporaries have prevailed. Bewkes rejects Tulloch's view accepted by Pfleiderer, that he was a disciple of Erskine of Linlathen, and thinks it probable that F. D. Maurice drew more than he was aware from the wellsprings of Campbell's understanding of the Christian consciousness.

A biographical element enters the work. Three chapters (Part I) are given to the Row parish period and the heresy trial. Campbell's conscientious revolt against traditional Calvinism, his insistence on the rights of reason, his broadening conceptions of atonement and pardon, his emphasis on assurance as against religious fear, are presented with clarity; and the dramatic and pathetic story of the heresy trial is told with insight and restraint. Campbell was, in effect, appealing from the Westminster Confession to the Scriptures, while his opponents were unwilling to go behind the Confession or to admit the possibility of new light on theology after its formulation. From a legal and narrowly ecclesiastical point of view, they had everything on their side. The church was more specifically bound to the Confession than to the Bible; moreover, the Confession left no doubt on "limited atonement," and it was justly feared that an attempt to prove this doctrine from the Bible might result in endless disputation. Campbell's ideas at that time were still fluid; he lacked the certainty that builds a party, and his defense was unconvincing. At sunrise May 25, 1831, after a night session of the Assembly in which Campbell's father made a noble plea for his son, the trial ended with a solemn act of deposition.

Mr. Bewkes in Part II ("the theologian of later years") shows the later course of Campbell's thought in relation to the main intellectual currents of the time. Campbell met the Oxford Movement with a "clear statement of essential Protestantism" in his *Christ the Bread of Life* (1851). He owed the suggestion of his *Thoughts on Revelation* (1862) to Mansel's Bampton Lectures, *The Limits of Religious Thought*. Mansel, by a deviation from Kantianism, held that the human mind cannot truly know except by revelation. Campbell defends the unsophisticated assurance of communion with God against both sophisticated skepticism and a narrow doctrine of revelation. He diverges from Schleiermacher, however, in declining to exclude a cognitive element in revelation; and from his younger contemporary, Ritschl, in his realization of the factor of immediacy with Ritschianism avoided. The

chapter on "Naturalism and Religion" exhibits what was at the time a radical view. Campbell accepted the biblical miracles, but not as attestations of biblical teachings, and divorced belief in the supernatural from the externally miraculous.

Campbell's best known work, *The Nature of the Atonement* (1856), is examined in Part III. Bewkes believes the doctrine of the Scottish theologian has at this point been misrepresented, partly owing to defects of terminology. This is particularly true of the suggestions of vicarious repentance contained in some of his phrases. The deeply religious concepts of Campbell are conveyed by our author with the help of numerous quotations. Bewkes declines to label the theory "moral" as excluding "objective" elements. With reference to the atonement, he again makes comparison of Campbell with Schleiermacher and Ritschl and finds him more closely paralleled by Horace Bushnell than by either of the Germans.

On the last page we read: "Campbell himself felt that he had been not so much an original thinker as a rediscoverer of the great truths always implicit in the Christian gospel." This seems to say more than it does say. If the "great truths" were "implicit," did anyone before him make them explicit? If he first clearly perceived them, had he not a right to call himself their discoverer rather than their "rediscoverer"? I think it is fair to say that Mr. Bewkes fails us as a judge of Campbell's originality. It is surprising that he neglects to compare the earnest Scot with any of the classical expounders of the doctrine of atonement before Schleiermacher. Obviously Campbell has affinities with Abailard and also with Arminius, and comparison with these and other predecessors would have enabled our author to pronounce with more assurance on the degree of his originality. Bewkes is inclined to rate highly the independence and depth of Campbell's mind, but his method permits some vagueness in the evidence for this view; and the historian will have to go somewhat beyond these pages in order to obtain a satisfying estimate of the historical significance of Campbell's contribution to thought. The theologian will not feel this defect to the same degree; and the book is primarily written for him. It is a revealing study of a new theology in the making.

The University of Chicago.

John T. McNeill.

SØREN KIERKEGAARD

By THEODOR HAECKER. Translated, with a biographical note, by Alexander Dru. London: Oxford University Press, 1937. 67 pages. \$1.00.

This brief account of the original Danish thinker whose influence is being extended to the English-speaking world has many virtues. It testifies to an unusual appreciation of the religious values in the *Discourses*, and to a seasoned familiarity with the Kierkegaardian literature.

The theologian is directed chiefly to the religious discourses and to the *Journals* by the author, rather than to such works as *Fear and Trembling*, the *Fragments*, and the *Unscientific Postscript*, which the author arrestingly though precariously describes as philosophical myths in the style of Plato. He believes that what Kierkegaard has to say about love is more significant theologically than what he says about faith. The treatment of the latter topic, though intriguing to the philosopher and psychologist, is in his view marred by "dialectical exaggerations." There is cited by way of example of the treasures to be found in the *Journals*, a very remarkable passage on the omnipotence of God, in relation to his goodness and to human freedom, which in its brief and pregnant sentences sketches a theme for an entire theological work of first-rate originality and importance.

The attention of the philosopher is called to the well-known Kierkegaardian thesis that subjectivity is truth. This thesis is quite correctly interpreted as not excluding objectivity in the sense of the reality of objects; it is intended to mark the essential human form for the highest objectivity: the existence of God. It has nothing to do with subjectivism, solipsism, scepticism, etc., but expresses the judgment that truth of being, the ideal truth of the concrete personality, is the only absolutely concrete and essential truth, all other kinds of truth being in the last analysis indifferent. "What Kierkegaard has brought into Philosophy," says the author, is the problem of "the being and essence of the person."

The concept of the dialectical, which plays so large a rôle in Kierkegaard, is interestingly treated, and the various ways of attempting to escape from it are discussed. But nothing is said of Kierkegaard's view that one of these illegitimate ways of escape is the interposition of an external authority between the individual and his decision, and his view that this is to defraud God of his right to exact the utmost in the way of spiritual exertion from the person, the exhaustion of his finite resources as the road to peace in the infinite.

As a good Catholic the author finds the source of most of Kierkegaard's errors in his lack of a relationship to the teaching authority of the church, so that he had "no guide but his conscience, which he followed faithfully." Criticism is directed to the "exaggerations" of his dialectic, his bitter one-sidedness in applying his corrective, his failure to understand marriage and its hope in the sacrament of baptism, and his lack of adequate appreciation for any other form of Christian community than that represented in the invisible church, the communion of saints, neglecting the institutional reality of the church through its possession of the sacraments.

I confine myself to a single remark. There are indeed many who cannot breathe freely the rarefied atmosphere of consistency in the pursuit of a thought to its last consequences, and find such pursuit exaggerated; but the passion for such consistency, and the dialectical fearlessness which it involves, are a direct measure of the greatness of the thinker.

University of Minnesota.

David F. Swenson.

AMERICAN CONTACTS WITH THE EASTERN CHURCHES,
1820-1870

By P. E. SHAW. Chicago: The American Society of Church History, 1937. 208 pages. \$3.00.

The imprimatur of The American Society of Church History is a sufficient guarantee of the scholarly character of this book. Professor Shaw has searched industriously through the printed sources and the secondary treatises pertinent to his subject and has presented his summary in objective fashion. In some sections, notably that large portion dealing with the labors of the missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, he has little to add to what is already familiar to specialists. In some other sections, notably in the interesting chapter on the Greek Evangelical Church, he has utilized less accessible material. We must be particularly grateful to him for his initiative in utilizing periodicals and works in Modern Greek.

The chief limitation of the book is the failure to cover all that is promised by the title. The reader is led to expect that all American contacts with the Eastern churches in the half century between 1820 and 1870 will be dealt with. Yet important parts of the story are not so much as mentioned, others are dismissed with a scant reference, and the preface fails to apprise the unwary of the omissions. Nothing is said of the beginnings of the United Presbyterian mission among the Copts in Egypt, although here a policy was adopted which was quite contrary to that of the Protestant Episcopal emissaries and of the American Board, and its history would have modified some of the comments on the missions which were discussed. Almost nothing is given on the missions in Syria or on those to the Nestorians in Persia.

The volume pays its chief attention to the contacts of American missionaries with the Greek Orthodox church, with some treatment of relations with the Armenian church. Within this field it is sound and important.

Yale University.

K. S. Latourette.

EGERTON RYERSON, HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

By C. B. SISSONS. Volume I. New York: Oxford University Press, 1937. xii, 601 pages. \$5.00.

Although a most important feature of the ecclesiastical and political history of Upper Canada (now Southern Ontario) up to 1840 was the attempt to establish the Church of England, students have not had adequate biographies of the greatest figures in the struggle. The deficiency in the case of Egerton Ryerson, Methodist clergyman and leading opponent of a privileged church, has been well supplied. This volume, which ends at September, 1841, makes it reasonably clear that Ryerson was not opposed

to the Church of England as an institution, that in fact he was most sympathetically disposed towards its doctrine and government, but stood for freedom of worship and equal treatment for all denominations. Of course, the large and interpretative life of Ryers cannot be written until we have comparable collections of documents, as conveniently available, relating to leaders of other interested groups. An exhaustive examination of the *Christian Guardian* and contemporary newspapers will also be necessary.

The index does not equal the excellence of the main part of the work. Some names and subjects have not been included and one or two incorrect page references have crept in. In some places, too, the references to sources are inadequate. For example, the writer alleges (54, 112n) that the assembly gave financial aid to the Canadian Wesleyan Methodist Church but does not give any specific reference to the public accounts. However, these minor imperfections do not detract from the importance of the work.

The Board of Regents of Victoria University are to be congratulated on publishing this volume, as part of the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the beginning of Victoria University, in 1836, as the Upper Canada Academy. It demonstrates the need of a scholarly and broad interpretation of ecclesiastical history in relation to all other Canadian questions; for in Canada church factors greatly influenced general public affairs.

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